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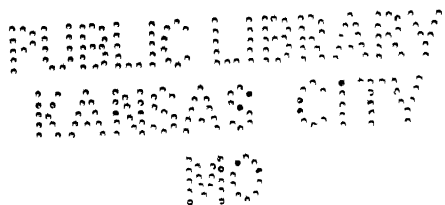
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*THESE RULE FRANCE*

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*The Story of Edouard Daladier and the  
Men around Daladier*

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# THESE RULE FRANCE

*by* STANTON B. LEEDS

AUTHOR OF

*Cards the Windsors Hold*

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*INSCRIBED*



TO H. L. MENCKEN,  
WITH ESTEEM AND WITH  
AFFECTION



“A REGIME SHOULD BE JUDGED,  
LIKE A TREE, BY ITS FRUITS.”

*Charles Maurras.*





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*THESE RULE FRANCE*



# P R E F A C E

## PRESIDENTS AND PREMIERS



### THE PRESIDENTS

It was persons who mattered in France, not parties, from 1871 to 1939, and among the persons who counted those who come to mind first are the Premiers and the Presidents.

The Presidents of the French Republic, from 1871 to 1920, were:

#### *Louis Adolphe Thiers*

He served from February seventeenth, 1871, to May twenty-fourth, 1873, when he resigned. Until 1872, his headquarters were in Versailles.

#### *Marie E. P. M. de MacMahon*

This Marshal of France was President from May twenty-fourth, 1873, until January thirtieth, 1879, when he, too, resigned.

#### *Jules Grévy*

A financial scandal forced this President out of office on December second, 1887, after he had been re-elected.

#### *Sadi Carnot*

This grandson of a revolutionist who helped guillotine aristocrats was assassinated, dying June twenty-fifth, 1894.



*Casimir Perier*

A member of the "new aristocracy of wealth," Perier resigned January fifteenth, 1895, after attacks made on his "manners, habits, and friends."

*Felix Faure*

This "second-rate, but handsome," man, served as President from January seventeenth, 1895, to February sixteenth, 1899. On the afternoon of his last day as President, he received visits at the Elysée Palace from Cardinal Richard, Archbishop of Paris, the Prince of Monaco, and the beautiful wife of an artist, Madame Steinheil. During her call he was taken ill, dying later in the evening.

*Emile Loubet*

He remained President his full seven-year term, serving from February eighteenth, 1899, to February eighteenth, 1906. Otherwise he was unexceptional.

*Armand Fallières*

He also served for seven years, from February eighteenth, 1906, to February eighteenth, 1913.

*Raymond Poincaré*

The President of the French Republic during the war that lasted from 1914 to 1918 served his full term, leaving office on February eighteenth, 1920.

The so-called "after-war Presidents" were *Paul Deschanel*, who went mad after eight months in office, *Alexandre Millerand*, who was forced out of the Elysée by the Left parties led by Herriot, *Gaston Doumergue*, who served his seven-year term, quitting office in 1931, to be succeeded by *Paul Doumer*, who was shot a year later. His place was taken by *Albert Lebrun*, who was re-elected in 1939.

## THE PREMIERS

The Premiers ruled, the Presidents only reigned. Unhappily, from the beginning of the Republic until Daladier's tenure of power in 1939, there were one hundred and four Premiers. Happily, an understanding of them is simplified by the fact that only a few of them mattered. For example, the Foreign Minister, Theophile Delcassé, who negotiated the Entente Cordiale with England, was of far more account than the Premier, *Maurice Rouvier*.

The Premiers who mattered before the war of 1914 were *Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau*, *Emile Combes*, and *George Clemenceau*.

They disestablished the Church and established democracy, and what they wrote into the law, *Aristide Briand*, as Premier, enforced. All these, however, were temporarily superseded when the Socialist leader, Jean Jaurès, won a great victory in May, 1914, only to be shot on the eve of war. During the war the more important ministries were those of *Briand*, *Paul Painlevé*, and *Clemenceau*. Clemenceau was the sixty-fourth Premier. After the war, the Premiers who mattered represented two distinct tendencies.

The more conservative Premiers were *Poincaré*, *Tardieu*, *Doumergue*, and *Laval*. Their less conservative opponents who mattered were *Herriot*, *Chaumets*, *Blum*, and *Daladier*. While there were other Premiers, they were minor men who filled in while the really powerful were out of office. For the most part, they were no more than an excuse for appointing the neglected to one office or another, and so satisfying as many politicians as possible. But it would take an adding machine to keep track of the ministers, under-secretaries, chefs du cabinet, and other parliamentarians added by all these Premiers to the government payroll.

It would take a book to list their merits and demerits. In general, however, they can be differentiated, one from another, by saying that some wanted to be Premier, others President. In other

words, some wanted to make history, as the Premiers did, others only to write it, as the Presidents did. But who permitted them to do this, to write history and to make it? By whose authority did they give orders? "Answering these questions correctly, telling the story of France," the American Ambassador in Paris before the war of 1914, General Horace Porter, once told a distinguished company, "this is a difficult business, for many refuse to remember that only two things matter pre-eminently to Frenchmen. What determines everything else in France, what matters most to the French is personal and national liberty. In the end those who defend these values best always come to power.

"These rule France."

## THE POLITICIANS

"The authors of the French Revolution in 1789 declared that sovereignty derives from the people—from below, not from above—and acceptance or rejection of the spirit of '89 is at the base of the rift between Left and Right in France. Between people who are 'for '89' and people who are 'against '89' the lines are as sharply drawn as geographical boundaries."—

André Siegfried.

(Quoted from the July, 1939, issue of the American Quarterly Review, *Foreign Affairs*.)



## The Elysée and Clemenceau

IT HAS been remarked, and very justly, that Paris is not France, but the fact remains that the richly colored, often sensational history of the Third Republic, from 1872 through 1939, was written in the capital. Almost from the beginning it was signed and counter-signed in the gray building known as the Elysée Palace. Once the home of Madame de Pompadour, the perfumed lady who presided over the pleasures of the King of France, Louis XV, its graveled courtyard gave on a narrow street. Hemmed in as it was by barracks, alas! this entrance created a false idea of the palace. Cold it never was! Within were reception rooms warmed by the Pompadour's taste and intelligence, and, on the second floor, a comfortable apartment where the President of the French Republic lived. In 1939, while this book was being written, the President still lived there.

He still looked out from windows in the rear on a long garden where trees shaded lawn and flower beds and pools. But he ran two risks, an attack from airplanes and revolution. In the meantime a dictator, Edouard Daladier, ruled, and the President still could see his garden from his windows. Beyond was a stretch of park that skirted the Champs Elysées, that majestic boulevard which runs from the Place de la Concorde to the Arc de Triomphe. Across the Seine, the river that bisects Paris, was the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, familiarly known as the Quai d'Orsay. Next door was the Chamber of Deputies, France's House of Representatives. Up the Boulevard Saint Germain was the War Department, and, farther away from

the river, the Senate, housed in the Luxembourg Palace. Around this palace and its adjacent park the buildings of the University of Paris were scattered. One of them was called the Sorbonne. But important as all these centers of influence were, they were less important to the business of managing the Republic than the Finance Ministry in the Louvre, the Ministry of Justice on the Place Vendôme, and the Ministry of the Interior on the Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré, almost across the street from the Elysée. From this last ministry the police were directed, and the prefects.

The prefects administered the departments, those states into which Napoleon divided France. In these lesser centers the prefects carried out the orders of the Minister of the Interior. But while this minister came as near as anyone did to ordering French activities, nothing he ordered, nothing any minister wished done, nothing the French Parliament voted, was legally effective until the President of the Republic signed the law, the decree or the order. On the other hand, nothing the President signed was valid unless a minister counter-signed it. So it was in the Elysée, where all this signing was done, that the history of modern France was written.

The Presidents who wrote it were few in number. Up to 1939, there had been only fourteen Presidents. But there had been many Premiers.

The Premier was chosen by the President. When he was asked by the President to form a government, the Premier chose his ministers. But his government ruled only until Parliament refused it a vote of confidence. When the Senators or Deputies did this, the Premier and his government resigned, and the President appointed, sometimes the outgoing Premier, though usually another one, and this Premier chose new or former ministers. To become a minister was the average politician's ambition, as the Presidents knew.

The Presidents had been ministers themselves. In other respects, however, they were men very different in character, background, and accomplishment. But however much they differed,

they were never more than figureheads, established for the moment in that gorgeous setting, the Elysée. Those who ruled France lived elsewhere.

These people whose opinion counted were represented by the Presidents, of course, and by the Premiers and the politicians. But only partially! A King would have done as well. In fact, when the Republic was founded, the French meant to have a King.

They meant to go royal again.

The Third Republic, fashioned out of the ruins of the Second Empire and the defeats that marked the war with Prussia that began in 1870, was intended to be a constitutional monarchy. With this idea in mind, Thiers and his associates, setting up a provisional government when Napoleon III was taken prisoner at Sedan, carefully worked out a constitution that would limit the powers of the sovereign.

The last King of the French, Louis Philippe, had refused to grant universal male suffrage, but the Emperor had granted it, and this right to vote was preserved by the constitution makers.

This cost the French a King, or spared them one, if you like. Looking over the constitution, the Bourbon prince who was the head of France's royal family, shook his head. Offered the crown, to the surprise of the Royalist majority and the Republicans, too, His Royal Highness said "no."

This prince who said "no" was the Comte de Chambord, a grandson of Charles X, and hence a grand-nephew of Louis XVI, the King who was beheaded.

The Count preferred France's historic flag to the tricolor of the Revolution and was frank about it. But his real reason for refusing the crown was that he did not wish responsibility without power. Declining the throne, he left the way clear for those who wished to set up a republic "as much like a monarchy as possible," to use the words of the Comte's own cousin. What this member of the younger branch of the royal family said, others agreed was wise, and so the



Third Republic was fashioned into something as much like a monarchy as possible.

It differed from a constitutional and hereditary monarchy only in this, that its sovereign was elected by the Senate and Chamber of Deputies, meeting together at Versailles every seven years unless circumstances made it necessary to choose a President more often.

This happened frequently.

The first President was the historian, Louis Adolphe Thiers. As a minister of King Louis Philippe, he had feared the suffrage. Under Louis Napoleon, he had grown used to it, only to suppress the civil war in Paris known as the Commune by methods as severe as any practiced in Prussia. But when a minor election in 1873 favored the extremists, Thiers lost the moderates' confidence. In recommending the Republic as "the regime which divides us least," he had misjudged the strength of Gambetta and young Clemenceau, men who really believed in popular elections.

An incarnation of middle-class virtue, Thiers had been considered infallible. Turning on him now, the monarchists and the nationalists elected a popular soldier, Marshal de MacMahon, in his place. But in attempting to hold the throne until it should seem advisable to call on a Bourbon prince to reign, the Marshal exercised his constitutional right to dissolve Parliament with the consent of the Senate, which was elected for a much longer period than the Chamber of Deputies and by a very much more restricted vote.

The popular vote, returning to the Chamber a majority which was unfavorable to him, went against the Marshal, and he resigned.

His place was taken by "a safe and sane politician" named Jules Grévy who was re-elected after his seven-year term as President. Unfortunately, Grévy had a red-haired son-in-law named Daniel Wilson and too great a liking for money, but it was the son-in-law, not Grévy, who hit on the remunerative idea of selling the Légion of Honor, a decoration that carries with it the right to wear a red ribbon in the lapel as well as other privileges. Much coveted

at one time, this order was founded by the great Napoleon, who used it to reward acts of courage on the field of battle. Presently, the government began giving it for other reasons, for services performed elsewhere than in the army.

This lessened its prestige. Even so, selling it was inexcusable, the public decided. So Grévy had to resign.

The story of the Third Republic from then until 1914 was one of civil strife that dwarfed every other consideration. Two main groups were at odds, the conservatives who believed in government "from above" and the heirs of the French Revolution who believed in government by the people, in what the French sociologist, André Siegfried, has described as rule "from below." Among the conservatives were monarchists, clericals and nationalists. Arrayed against them were the Radical Socialists, Free Masons most of them and small tradesmen, and later the Socialists. But more than anyone else it was George Clemenceau who saw to it that there was no return to empire or monarchy, and no President with a chance to survive if he did anything more than write his name where the Premier told him to sign.

It was Clemenceau who made and unmade Presidents. When Grévy's successor, Sadi Carnot, was assassinated, the new President, Casimir Perier, an aristocrat from the business world, showed signs of independence, only to have Clemenceau force him to resign. When the next President, Felix Faure, died suddenly, Clemenceau, who held the balance of power, maneuvered an obedient political wheel horse named Emile Loubet into the Elysée. When that plump little man's seven years as President were finished, another well-behaved politician named Armand Fallières took his place and stayed in it because it did not matter what he did.

The real story was elsewhere.

It is ominous with thunder, streaked with lightning, this tale of how George Clemenceau saved the Republic, of how he kept in his hand sufficient power to sway the balance, to keep attention fixed on "the enemies." To Clemenceau these enemies were the two

mainstays of the old regime, the army and the Church. In the field of thought, ecclesiastical training had provided royalty with its ablest propagandists and often with statesmen. In the field of action, the army was its strong right hand. Together these "enemies" made royalty possible.

"Well, why not?" I heard a pretty American ask Clemenceau at a luncheon in Paris before the war.

"You Americans are too romantic," the old man answered. He was old even then, and this was in 1910. "You think all kings are like Henry of Navarre. You forget what a hard, long road France's first Bourbon king traveled before he came to power. He *fought* for what he got! But Louis XVI was a pampered half-wit. Thanks to the training Fenelon and others gave him, he learned enough—well, enough to have made him a good secretary to Talleyrand, but no more. And the soldiers? Since Napoleon? Boulanger? Madam, if I laugh you must excuse me."

He spoke of other things then, of the anarchist who had emphasized his beliefs by tossing a bomb into the Chamber of Deputies. But this quaint argument was not the only one to disturb the early days of the Republic.

They were lit up, too, by General Boulanger's attempt to become a dictator. Known as "the man on horseback," this popular officer let so many opportunities to seize the Elysée slip through his fingers that people finally decided he was no Bonaparte, a circumstance that provoked a sneer from Clemenceau who had fought him.

A curious man, sensitive, masking his feelings behind shouts, growls, and sneers, Clemenceau distrusted soldiers and priests. Only those willing to agree could get along with him, and of these only a few, men like Mandel and Tardieu, were exceptional, for Clemenceau wanted only inferiors around him.

"They are plentiful," Marshal Foch remarked to the American staff officer, Colonel William T. Starr, "and men like Clemenceau are rare." But if, like Foch, Clemenceau was a man of unusual pro-

portions, he was also a politician. Needing money with which to play politics, he came near being ruined by the last adventure of the French engineer, Ferdinand de Lesseps, the genius who built the Suez Canal. Ten years after he had completed that linking of the Mediterranean with the Red Sea, de Lesseps decided to cut a canal across the Isthmus of Panama. But he ran short of money and appealed to Parliament for permission to float a bond issue in France. Fearful that de Lesseps had undertaken too much and at the same time frightened of bringing to an end this great undertaking of which the French were so proud, Senators and Deputies hesitated—and were lost. Tempted by agents of the Panama Canal Company, some of these parliamentarians sold their votes.

The bond issue was authorized by Parliament, and the bonds floated in June, 1888. Seven months later, the Panama Canal Company failed.

Its books showed a loss of 1,400,000,000 francs, approximately 300,000,000 dollars. Among those who had bought these bonds that French parliamentarians, some with bribes in their pockets, had authorized were 850,000 French investors.

They were furious.

The Panama Canal Company's buying of votes and favors had gone so far that a sigh of relief greeted the convenient death of its agent, Baron Jacques de Reinach. Reinach's friend, Cornelius Herz, another merchant of bribery fled. But he left traces behind him. One led to Clemenceau. In his fight for the Republic, the Tiger, as George Clemenceau was called, had to get money where he could find it. But he spent it on his paper.

This small paper was necessary to him as a politician. While he was always a power because he was a strong, determined, intelligent man, when Parliament was not in session he had to have an organ in which to express his opinions, otherwise those who had papers and disliked him could have told stories about him to which he would have been unable to reply immediately and effectively. So he kept his paper going.

He was a Deputy at the time of the Panama scandal. Forced out of politics because he had known Herz, it was a number of years before he came back. When he did so, he was elected a Senator, and Senators were elected by the municipal councils, not by popular vote. Once back in Parliament, Clemenceau was to become a minister. Later on, from 1906 to 1909, a long period, he was Premier. What put him back in the saddle was the Dreyfus case which began in 1894.

The international aspects, military and political, of this case I shall deal with fully in discussing the army. For the moment it is sufficient to remark that in France itself it wiped out old memories.

It made people forget the Panama affair, but it divided France into hostile camps, for the fight that developed now between the Right and the Left, between the conservatives and the Catholics on one hand, and the Republicans, the heirs of the French Revolution, on the other—this fight was far more than an attempt to discover if a Jewish officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, had sold military secrets to the Germans. Twice convicted, in the end Dreyfus accepted a pardon. But by then he had become no more than a symbol used in a political battle that brought to power two Premiers who changed France fundamentally. First Pierre Waldeck-Rousseau, a corporation attorney, then Emile Combes, who had studied for the priesthood, demanded the separation of Church and State. Education was in the hands of the Church. "But the people must be taught to think as we do," these two Premiers insisted, while Clemenceau nodded approvingly. Winning elections by the narrowest margins, they faced the fact that the army held the balance of power. If the Duc d'Orleans, now head of the royal House of France, were to be restored to the throne, he would use the army for that purpose.

His chief partisan, Charles Maurras, admitted as much in his "*L'Enquête sur la Monarchie*," or "A Study of Monarchy." Like the Republicans, Maurras realized that the army was in the hands of some thirty thousand conservative families who sent their sons into the service, supplementing their meager pay. Devoted to

Church and Royalty, many of these officers had won the affection of their troops, so they could have led a revolt, and the Republicans naturally dreaded this possibility. But no opportunity to attack the army presented itself until Dreyfus was convicted.

The Republicans used this conviction to break the hold of the Catholic and Royalist officers on the army.

It was their contention that the officers who judged Dreyfus were actuated by prejudice, a prejudice not confined to France, and one that has persisted for centuries. As late as 1939 in America, a man asked the court to change his name from Einstein to Easton.

The change would help him at West Point, he declared. But that Dreyfus was unfairly convicted, many Frenchmen refused to believe. While the evidence against him was circumstantial, it was reinforced by the testimony of Bertillon whose methods were adopted by police throughout the world. Journalists and politicians, however, overrode his findings, burying them in invective. To them Dreyfus owed his pardon. Nevertheless, he showed a pronounced distaste for his self-appointed defenders.

"I will see you," he told me once, "because you were courteous to me that day," referring to a luncheon he had come to, "but not one word for publication. I am a soldier and I distrust journalists almost as much as I dislike politicians."

He foresaw what the politicians who saved him would do when they got into power. Almost at once, they began pushing Republicans into the high command. That they did this regardless of whether or not they were able men, the war showed. In August and September, 1914, General Joffre, the French commander-in-chief, relieved more than two hundred general officers of their command, charging them with incompetence. But that the army was the sole danger the Republic ran, Clemenceau never believed.

He saw to it that an attack was made on the Church as well as the army. Inculcating respect for the teachings of experience, "the clerics weakened our cause," Clemenceau told me, "because the Republic was an experiment. Both Waldeck-Rousseau and that

half-priest, Combes," knew what they were doing when they dis-established the Church, but it was a young Premier, Aristide Briand, who carried out this law, taking over Church property and exiling religious orders. In the meantime, with instruction in the hands of the state, voters were growing up to believe in the Republic, a circumstance that brought to an end the first period of the Republic's history.

This period had been occupied mainly with assuring the future of democratic government, but there was no longer any danger now of a return to monarchy or to dictators such as the Napoleons had been.

The second period of the Republic's life included the war that began in 1914 and what led up to it. By establishing "rule from below," Clemenceau had made parties important, above all his own, the Radical Socialist party, "a party of average men," he told me, "who hated priests and soldiers." But this party had other leaders than Clemenceau. Where Clemenceau believed in "the policy of revenge," in recovering Alsace and Lorraine from the Germans, others wished to forget "the lost provinces" and develop colonies, a point of view ably represented by Joseph Caillaux. But even here French interests ran counter to those of the Kaiser, so the French stopped squabbling with the English about Egypt and made that famous alliance with Britain known as the "Entente Cordiale." Approving this, Clemenceau helped elect Raymond Poincaré President because Poincaré shared his view that Alsace and Lorraine should be recovered. But though Poincaré was President and Clemenceau powerful, they had cause for worry.

They were both to watch with agonised concern the campaign of the Socialist leader, Jean Jaurès, for disarmament.

This campaign Jaurès justified by saying that the German Socialists "would not let the Kaiser attack France." Nonsense? Obviously! But the French were tired of war.

They wanted to disarm and spend their money on themselves, so Jaurès preached disarmament in order to win elections. What-

ever else he may have been, he was a politician. Building up the Socialist party, until it became, next to the Radical Socialist party, the most important group on the Left, he won, in May, 1914—the elections were held every four years—a victory that seems incredible at this distance. With Germany constantly arming, he was given a mandate to disarm France. Though few knew it, this had already been done.

It was Clemenceau who forced the truth into the open.

He was watching the Republic he had saved imperil the France he loved even more than the Republic, and, in sessions of the Senate that he described as "the most agonising" he had ever attended, he demanded and got the facts.

They were appalling. On July thirteenth, 1914, bearded by Clemenceau, the War Minister, Adolphe Messimy, admitted that France had no heavy artillery.

A former officer, and incidentally a friend of the beautiful foreign spy, Mata Hari, Messimy went on to confess that the army was ill equipped in every way. But why? How had this happened? Everyone knew that the Germans were preparing. Despite this fact, money that should have been spent on the French army had been diverted to purposes more pleasing to the voters, in other words to the business of winning elections.

"By whose order?" Clemenceau thundered, heat lightning in his question.

Those responsible, Messimy admitted, were various Ministers of War and Finance. Ever since the political battle that centered around Dreyfus, they had constantly ordered the high command of the army to cut army estimates from fifty percent to eighty percent. For years Germany had been spending twice as much on her army as France had spent on hers, though military experts had warned the government again and again that, if material were not provided with which to defend the frontier, men would have to fill the gap with their lives. As late as January sixth, 1914, the inspector general of artillery had warned Messimy's predecessor as Minister



of War that "from the point of view of improving the material in our forts, no progress has been made for forty years." What the Minister described as the General's "critical tone" drew a sharp reprimand. But this did not alter the fact that the French had neither forts nor artillery with which to block the Germans.

The Germans lost at the Marne because they outmarched their artillery. France was wide open. Leaving the Senate floor, Clemenceau fainted. But he came to life again, disillusioned but furious.

All he loved in life, France, was in mortal danger, and from that moment on he spared no one, not Poincaré, whom he accused of preferring constitutional methods to getting results, not the generals, whom he accused of incompetence, least of all the politicians. Savage, cruel, sarcastic, eloquent but heartbroken, this trembly old man in his seventies saw his paper cut to bits by the censor. But he was still a Senator, so after the losses that brought on the mutinies, he went to the Senate and shook the Painlevé government apart. His hand forced, Poincaré presently sent for Clemenceau. "You won't let anyone else rule, so try yourself," the President said, and Clemenceau tried.

He succeeded. Where others had failed, he managed a miracle. Faults he had certainly, but he was a man! If he saved France, however, if he was able to do this, it was not only because he was so completely masculine.

It was because he was French to the core. As a young man and an old one, always, he was France incarnate. As a result, it is possible to simplify the study of French history, for those who understand Clemenceau understand France. As few did, he illustrated those two main tendencies that struggle in every Frenchman. One is the urge to defend France, to make its defense a first consideration. Exposed to invasion as it is, this can be done well only by a dictator, as Clemenceau learned. But dictators invade individual liberty.

The defense of personal liberty is the other instinct every Frenchman has, the one that makes him rebel.

The whole story of France is the story of this fight to protect the individual from invasion, and France from invasion. At first Clemenceau spent his strength resisting the first invasion. Later in life he threw overboard all his early beliefs in order to stave off the second. But where, between these extremes, is the truth that makes men free? For centuries the French have discussed this question, often brilliantly. For centuries they have fought for the truth as they understood it, and they have fought gallantly, thanks partly to their women. As Clemenceau said, "Our women are women, and they like men to be men."

They affected French history profoundly. But less has been heard of them since royalty starred its Pompadours. Far more has been heard of the politicians, of whom Poincaré wrote.

A precise, patient little man who seemed smaller than he was because he always walked as if he were stooped over a desk, in his voluminous memoirs Poincaré lamented the fact that the Presidents had relinquished all their powers except the right to pardon. But he realized that these powers were unlikely to be revived.

The French feared government interference too much, a circumstance of which the politicians took advantage to tighten their own hold on power. If a dictator were installed at the Elysée, he would rule in the place of these Ministers.

This possibility explains the third period of the Republic's history.

It ran from the peace signed at Versailles in 1919 to the war that began in 1939. During this period the Premiers who came to power stood either for "rule from below," and so, by implication, for individual rights, or for "rule from above," the only possible way of defending France effectively. Either they danced to Clemenceau's tune, or pranced in the footsteps of that prey of the journalists, Edouard Herriot.

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## II

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### Herriot and the Debt

A POLITICIAN may hold two offices at the same time in France. When he was made Premier in 1924, Edouard Herriot remained Mayor of Lyons, and "as Premier," a journalist remarked, "he was a great Mayor of Lyons."

This remark was typical of that kind of journalism of which Herriot, a tall, ponderous and kindly man, complained more than once. If he was a popular mayor of his home town, that city of silks halfway between Paris and Marseilles, was that an excuse for describing him as "mairedelyon," a play on words reminiscent of Rabelais and invented by Leon Daudet? Hardly, Herriot's friends protested! Others insisted that the description was not only funny, but exact. In any case, whatever journalists may have said about Herriot, there was one thing they could not say about this professor of history.

They could not say he did not love his fellow man.

This love he expressed eloquently—pipe in one hand, the other on his heart, a suggestion of tears in his eyes—too eloquently perhaps, too emotionally. Electing him in 1936 President of the Chamber of Deputies, a position that corresponded to Speaker of the House of Representatives in America, his friends reflected that he would have that beautiful home to live in that is attached to the Chamber. But he would have to keep still.

He could no longer influence opinion except during certain prescribed visits to the President of the Republic, an office to which he

presumably aspired at times during the course of his career. But if he did, his ardor cooled with the years. Perhaps he saw too much of politics, grew tired, as the big-hearted do, of petty men's ambitions. Perhaps he had read too well the lessons of history, of that history in which he, too, played a part. However that may be, what explains Herriot is historic.

This history that leads to Herriot begins with Casimir Perier. When that multi-millionaire and dandy was elected President of the French Republic, he had an enemy in the person of the young Socialist, Alexander Millerand. To Millerand, Casimir Perier represented reaction and reaction had shown no inclination to use Millerand's services, and Millerand was a lawyer in need of briefs. So he attacked Perier, and he was joined in this attack by another Socialist, Jean Jaurès, who was not only a lawyer, but also a professor and a journalist. As a teacher and newspaperman, he had been relatively obscure.

It was as a lawyer that he outshone Millerand. Defending the journalist, Gerault-Richard, charged with libeling the President, Casimir Perier, Jaurès shocked France by saying that "the domain where the President of the Republic lives, where he summons ministers and signs decrees, the domain where he promulgates laws and where he receives, in the name of France, the representatives of the people, that domain is a land of usury. The Republic has become a government of money lenders and bankers."

He went on to tell the jury that he would "prefer to have as headquarters the houses of debauch where the old monarchy died than this suspect home where the honor of the Republic is dying."

"Monsieur Jaurès, you are going too far," the judge objected. "You are comparing the palace of the President to a house of ill fame."

"I am not comparing it," Jaurès responded acidly. "I am saying that I prefer a house of ill fame."

The upshot of this hyperbole was the condemnation of Gerault-Richard to a year in prison for libeling Casimir Perier, the President

whom Millerand called "The Enemy" because he wanted to be something more than "a signing machine," validating laws in the Elysée. But this was not all that came of this libel suit.

It made a conservative of Millerand. Because of the fame it brought Jaurès, Jaurès became more important in the Socialist party than Millerand, so Millerand turned his coat. Soon the conservatives began employing this former Socialist as a lawyer, and presently it was recognized that Millerand belonged in any conservative government.

It was Millerand who succeeded Clemenceau as Premier in 1920.

The old Tiger had another office in mind for by now Poincaré's seven years as President of the Republic were drawing to a close. Quitting as Premier, Clemenceau announced that he was a candidate for the Elysée. As the Father of Victory and the man who had saved France, his election seemed assured. Only one thing threatened it, the Frenchman's love of personal liberty. That this was in danger Poincaré noted in his memoirs.

There he records that Clemenceau's aide, George Mandel, planned to make "of the Presidency something it had never been as yet," to invest it with autocratic powers that Clemenceau had exercised during the war. Thanks to this possibility, the maneuvers against the old Tiger began at once.

"He won the war, but he lost the peace," his enemies insisted. From faint memories of the half-forgotten Panama affair rose the ghost of that merchant of bribery, Cornelius Herz, Clemenceau's friend. Along with this, the old hatred of Dreyfus revived. Besides, Clemenceau had been close to that legendary figure, Sir Basil Zaharoff, foreign munitions king. Foreigners were feared, and Paul Doumer helped organize the resistance to Clemenceau. A man highly respected because of his unblemished character, his frugal, devoted life, Doumer was to be assassinated by a foreigner later on when he became President himself. French to his finger tips, asking openly for support "against the Jews around Clemenceau," he suc-

ceeded in persuading Marshal Foch to consider becoming a candidate.

"He is greater outside the Elysée," Clemenceau snarled, but the campaign continued. Denied the title of Marshal, General de Castelnau rallied the Catholics to the standard of Foch, whose brother was a priest and a Jesuit. Even more dangerous to Clemenceau was the opposition of the old Breton whom James Gordon Bennett called "The Foxy Grandpa" of French politics, Aristide Briand. During the war Clemenceau had threatened him with prison for trying to make peace before France had won, and Briand had not forgotten. In the end, however, Foch was eliminated and a compromise reached.

The handsome President of the Chamber of Deputies, Paul Deschanel, was prevailed on to run, and won over Clemenceau.

The success of Deschanel was due in part to the Vatican, it was discovered presently. According to the story confirmed by those aware of the facts, one of the secretaries of Deschanel went directly to the Cardinal Secretary of State in Rome and said that if Deschanel were elected, relations between the Republic and the Church would change for the better. With Deschanel in the Elysée, the President would never hesitate to go to the cathedral. Notre Dame de Paris would see France's sovereign again. As for Clemenceau—but Clemenceau had long been the Holy See's chief enemy in France! Whatever response this subtle bid for help received, and as to details there is still some dispute, at Versailles it was obvious that the Catholic deputies voted for Deschanel.

His success was short lived. Eight months later, in his pyjamas, he tumbled from the platform of a train, to be found by the gate keeper's wife at the crossing where the train had slowed down.

"I knew he was someone," she explained, "because his feet were so clean, but I didn't believe him when he said that he was President of the Republic."

He still was, but for some time he had been signing official documents with the name and titles of Napoleon, a practice that

had to be interrupted, though it seems to have pleased him. Finally, he allowed his wife to sign for him, and, for a time, the fact was kept quiet that the President had gone mad. But after he fell from his private car, the truth came out, and, with his wife steadying his hand, Deschanel signed his resignation.

He was succeeded by Alexander Millerand, and what Millerand had once done to Casimir Perier, Edouard Herriot did to Millerand. As a leader of the Left, Herriot could not be expected to love Millerand, a highly paid corporation attorney who had run away from the Socialists—"pitter patter, does it matter?" to quote a café song—into the warming, welcoming arms of Big Business. But no one, not even Herriot, suspected that Millerand would attempt to revive the powers of the Presidency, and yet this was understandable, for what did the Elysée offer an able man? While the President had only his household servants to pay, his salary was only 1,800,000 francs a year (no great sum in dollars) plus the same amount for expenses. He could not make money in the Elysée. Had he, then, no right to power? Millerand seems to have thought that he had.

He had been elected President by the Senate and what was known as "the horizon blue" Chamber, a reference to the color of the French campaign uniform, for many of these deputies were soldiers who had profited politically from the enthusiasm that the victory over the Germans aroused.

This enthusiasm was sincere, but both Millerand and Poincaré, whom Millerand was to call in as Premier when he got rid of Briand, mistook its meaning. Briand understood much better how the French really felt. They were sick of war, and when Millerand went beyond what Presidents were supposed to do and openly maneuvered to end Briand's attempts to ease pressure on the Germans, the French resented this interference from the Elysée.

It suggested war and this suggestion Poincaré emphasized. Moving troops into the German Ruhr in an effort to collect reparations, he gave Briand his chance as Millerand was to learn to his

cost. On the other hand, when the Radicals, the middle-class party more fully described as the Radical Socialist party, won the 1924 elections it was Herriot who was pushed forward. His ample bulk screened Briand's activities. Allying himself and his followers with the Socialists to create what was called the Cartel, Herriot demanded Millerand's resignation on the ground that he had exceeded his authority when he interfered with Briand, who, playing golf with Lloyd George at Cannes, had ceded French guaranties.

The so-called "prisoner of the Elysée" was to protest in vain that as President he could only be called to account on the ground of treason. Commanding a majority in the Chamber of Deputies, Herriot refused to have anything to do with Millerand. As a result, there was no government. None could be formed because no one commanding a majority in Parliament would go to see Millerand and accept from him the task of constituting a ministry. Any government Millerand's friends would have formed would have been voted down at once, so the President was forced to resign. To replace him, the convention of Senators and Deputies meeting together at Versailles elected a Southerner, Gaston Doumergue, a man renowned for his ability to get his way by maneuvering behind the scenes, and also, quite incidentally, for his accent, a trick of speech destined within a decade to become famous.

The new President gave Herriot his head and there began then that period which led Herriot's critics to say that "as Premier of France, he was a great Mayor of Lyons." Chosen because he was the man "most likely to stop Briand," who was growing too powerful to suit many of the politicians, Herriot began wrong.

He took the Foreign Office himself and that was a position Briand wanted. Minister many times and fourteen times Premier, Briand was now lending a willing ear to suggestions that he should remain permanently at the Foreign Office. How he managed to remain for so long, as he did later on, puzzled many people, but apparently it was because he understood what the real meaning was of the French dislike of war. As Clemenceau said, comparing



Briand to Poincaré, "Poincaré knows everything, and understands nothing." As for Briand, he "knows nothing and understands everything," and what he understood thoroughly was the fact that the French really hated war most of all because it allowed the government to invade men's personal liberty. Interpreting the people's will, Briand assured them that there was no danger of war. For years, he brooded over peace like a philosophical hen. If so much as a fly buzzed like a machine gun, he would cock an eye and begin clucking his famous "away with your cannon and machine guns. So long as I am here, there will be no war."

This worked in Briand's favor, but Herriot also had been elected by popular acclaim, called on by the people to re-establish government "from below" and do away with the rule "from above" that Millerand and Poincaré represented, and that Tardieu and Doumergue, Laval and Daladier—this last after a sensational change of allegiance—were to represent later. But Herriot began wrong.

He took the Foreign Office himself. Instead of shouting about this, however, Briand whispered, and he had a voice like a violin string plucked by Kreisler. Soon echoes were everywhere, and they all suggested the same dismal tidings, that Herriot was not doing so well as might be. Furthermore, unfortunately for Herriot, he had not only Briand, but the banks against him.

A generous man, he did all he could "for the people," but in doing this he spent too much and brought on "a flight from the franc." Capital was exported. Soon it was known that the Bank of France was printing money out of all proportion to the gold reserve, and the franc fell to sixty to the dollar. Before Herriot, it had been at fifteen, a circumstance of which the Premier was reminded sharply. Fearful for their savings, crowds gathered round the Chamber of Deputies, overflowing into the Place de la Concorde, and Herriot resigned in a hurry, while, from the Elysée, Doumergue looked on apprehensively.

It was the first great crisis of his presidency and one that old stand-bys such as Briand and Joseph Caillaux could not solve.

The solution proved to be the return to power of Raymond Poincaré. Because the crisis was financial, the former President took the office of Finance Minister. Unlike Caillaux, now back from negotiating a debt settlement with America, Poincaré was not an authority on finance, so he called one in, a stooped, sharp-nosed economist named Gaston Jèze. Well known for his lectures at the Collège de France, this professor saw a chance to conquer the world.

The results of his advice were far-reaching.

It was Jèze who unsewed the gold bags of the world, starting a flood toward France. Obviously, people will send gold where they can get the most for it. Persuaded by Jèze, Poincaré stabilized the franc at twenty-five to the dollar, too low a figure and one that permitted the French to undersell everyone on the world market. Tourists, too, came to France in droves because of low prices, and France took payment in gold, a commodity that appealed to the French because it kept its value.

It was also effective internationally, and presently, gorged with gold, France laid a heavy hand on other economies, withdrawing loans when displeased with what other governments were doing. Jèze's dream that France should dominate the world financially had come true. In the end, however, it failed.

There are many experts who see in this French policy no more than the straw that broke the camel's back. Others have called it a prelude to disaster. In any event, it preceded significant happenings. In Austria, the credit structure cracked. In Germany, loans, mostly American and English, were suddenly frozen. In England, gold was abandoned as a standard. But the French seemed on the whole unworried. For the moment, France was prosperous, and, from the sense of well-being that this prosperity created, Doumergue was to profit. Everywhere admiring crowds hailed him affectionately as "Gastounet."

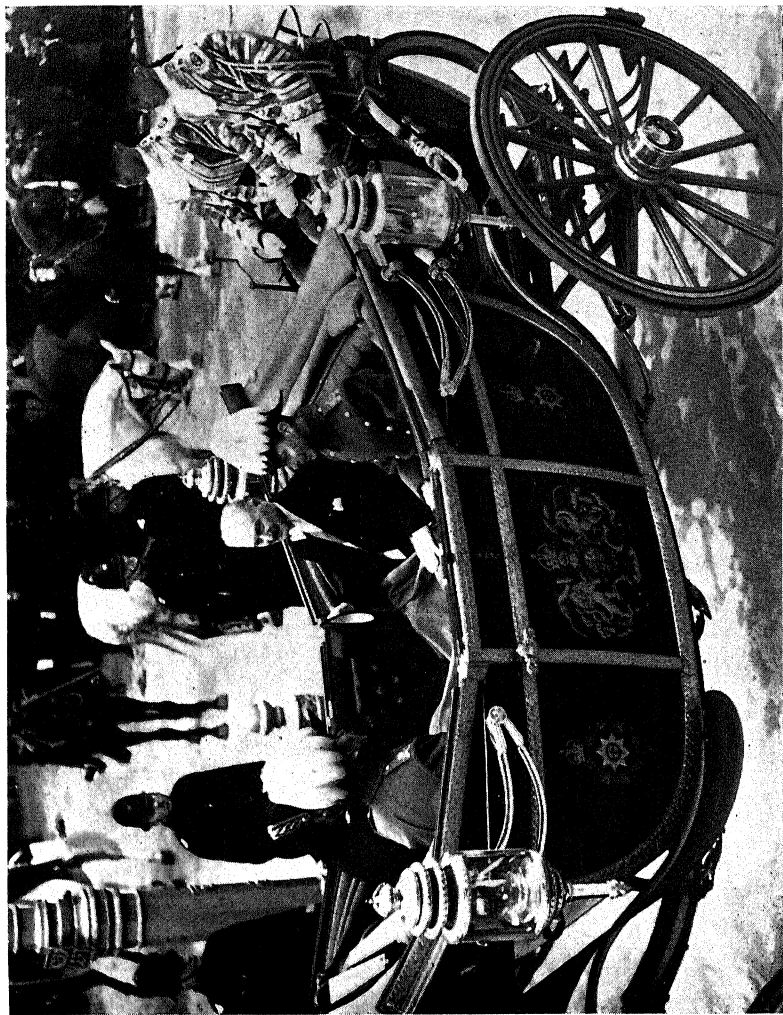
This nickname somehow seemed to fit him and the pressure on him to run again for the Presidency increased. If he foresaw, as Coolidge did in America, the inevitable, he did not say so publicly.

What he did spoke for him. Instead of renewing his lease on the Elysée, in 1931 he married and retired to his farm near Toulouse in the South, clearing the way for Briand. Famous by now as "The Apostle of Peace" who had negotiated with an American Secretary of State the agreement to abandon "war as an instrument of policy," Briand seemed the man destined to incarnate the sovereignty of the people. As he told his friends, "the suggestion has its merits." But it had its demerits also, and these demerits had not escaped the attention of the President of the Senate, Paul Doumer, who, in 1920, "fearing foreigners and Jews," had co-operated with Briand to bar Clemenceau from the palace.

He was to hesitate to test his strength against that of the old Breton who had so long been a power in France. But Doumer was a poor man who had worked hard all his life, and a series of devaluations had been so many capital levies on the savings of average men. In Doumer's household francs had always worked like Trojans. His wife had made every penny count, even turning clothes for the children, and though she and his family were probably sure for life of their home in the Luxembourg Palace where the President of the Senate lived, this white-bearded little man decided that he owed a duty to others who had struggled as hard as he had. In coming out against Briand, he stood up for the middle classes whose sureties Doumer felt Briand endangered by his friendliness to the Germans.

This attitude helped Doumer and it was just as well that it did, for every President is driven in from Versailles to the palace in Paris, escorted by cavalry, and the day Doumer was elected the route was lined by men determined to be rough if Briand won.

The feeling had grown, not only in Paris but throughout the country, that Briand's successive surrenders to the Germans meant war rather than peace. In agreement with Herriot, the grizzled Breton had proposed giving back Mayence and the Left Bank of the Rhine to France's recent enemy. In the end, Herriot was to surrender even the right to reparations, for he insisted that this policy



*Wide World Photos, Inc.*

The President of the French Republic, Albert Lebrun, driving with King George VI through the streets of London.



meant peace. At the same time he described Soviet Russia in fulsome terms as a power competent to counter-balance any possible German aggression. Combining with the Socialists and the Communists, he dubbed his opponents "the war party," a charge that won the elections in 1932.

These took place shortly after Doumer's assassination by a Russian half-wit named Gorguloff and the elevation to the Presidency without opposition of the President of the Senate, Albert Lebrun.

The first important task Lebrun faced as President was to choose a new Premier, and, after the usual consultations with the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, the chairmen of the principal parliamentary commissions, and the party leaders, he finally called on Herriot to form a new government, warning him that France was facing financial difficulties. With costs no longer paid in gold, England was producing at a discount and underselling the French. Furthermore, while for years France had bought more than she sold abroad, this unfavorable balance had been righted by the money tourists left in France. Many of them, especially those who spent freely, had been Americans.

The depression had limited this inflow, and Herriot knew that he could take no chances. Born in 1872 and already sixty years of age, in 1932 Herriot had to choose between politics and writing, a field in which he had made a mark with biographies of Beethoven and Madame Récamier, and a tribute to Greece that many compared to the best of Maurras. But he could not bring himself to forego power. At the same time, he knew what was happening abroad, the extent to which Germany was rearming. If the policy of making friends with Fascist Italy was to be abandoned, friendship with England and America was essential. Faced with this dilemma, Herriot, who had always liked to please everybody, did what his friends consider a courageous thing.

He proposed to honor France's promise to pay the debt owed to America. *But*, people stormed, through the moratorium imposed

by the American President, Herbert Hoover, German reparation payments have been ended! If the Germans did not pay, then the French should not pay. Answering this argument, in private Herriot reminded his friends that "we may need the Americans again." In public, along with François Pietri, the only conservative to come to his aid, he recalled the obvious fact that "a promise to pay is a promise to pay." But the opposition proved too much for him. Urged on by the Royalists, crowds gathered.

There was the threat of rioting and Herriot was voted out of power.

His domination was broken. Soon Camille Chautemps, and Herriot's own pupil, Edouard Daladier, were ruling not only Herriot's own party, but the country, for as President of the Chamber, an arbiter of debate, Herriot had palatial quarters to live in, but nothing to say beyond pronouncing an occasional benediction praising the Republic. In this priestly role, he no longer tempted the cartoonists, a sure sign that his force was spent. Except for a sly reference now and then to his six hundred pipes and his kindness, the satirists let him alone.

The French still felt, however, that Herriot's warm heart was something they could count on. Despite years of attack, despite descriptions of him that ranged from "a dupe of Stalin's" to "a friendly hippopotamus waltzing on a hot political stove," a liking for Herriot survived, evidence that "the true tomb of the dead is in the heart of the living," as Herriot said himself in a notable funeral oration. But if Herriot was respected because of his sincere belief in popular rule, if he was liked because of his long fight for government "from below," for personal liberty, he was not feared as some of his opponents were. Of these the best was Tardieu.

It was this lieutenant of Clemenceau's who stepped to the front of the fight for government "from above" when the old Tiger was pushed into the background. More than anyone else, Tardieu represented the bankers and industrialists who warred on Herriot and much that Herriot represented. In the end, however, like Herriot,

Tardieu had to retire. But unlike Herriot, for years, Tardieu went right on saying things that bit into the mind of the French, though few realized the extent of his influence until, in July, 1939, speaking at Versailles, Herriot echoed official opinion, referring in sensational terms to values long disregarded in France. But if Herriot praised the Kings, this meant no return to monarchy.

It meant only a return to the royal methods, a temporary, a partial return to that government "from above" that Tardieu had advocated.



### III

## Tardieu's Retirement

THE great Clemenceau trained two lieutenants to believe in government "from above," both able men, but different. Where Mandel, for the most part, worked behind the scenes, Clemenceau's other lieutenant, André Tardieu, was always out in the open, frankly—and finally only too frankly—leading the fight to re-establish authoritative government. But if he had faults, he also had virtues.

He was born to a family in easy circumstances. Early in life, however, it was recognized that young André had a future wholly his own. At school, where he was in competition with brilliant men like André Siegfried, Tardieu won all the prizes. But to a none too popular habit of coming out first, he added a pithy exactitude in pointing out the errors of others that lost nothing from the manner of its delivery. So, in politics, despite his brains—"the brains of the Republican Reaction," to quote one of his opponents—Tardieu was handicapped. Coming out first and pointing out seconds is no way to behave among the tribunes of the people.

His start was due to sheer ability, to an ability that would not be denied. Born in 1876, passing the difficult examinations that precede entry into the Ecole Normale, a high school where students are extremely well taught and study endlessly, he finished at the University of Paris. Attending lectures there is a pleasure and young André was never one to neglect his pleasures, as diplomats knew, for after graduating Tardieu went into the foreign service. Sent to Berlin in 1897, he remained two years, getting illuminating

close-ups of the Kaiser and Prince Bernhard von Buelow, Bismarck's eventual and only able successor.

This done, Tardieu returned to Paris.

His political career there began in 1899 when he became an executive secretary under Waldeck-Rousseau. By 1902, he had been remarked. That the powerful were impressed by him is evident from the fact that at twenty-six years of age he was made a professor of history in the famous *Ecole des Sciences Politiques*, no slight honor because this school was founded by wealthy men disgusted by the incompetence of the courtiers around Napoleon III, "those whisperers of sweet nothings whose mistakes cost a fortune." Parting with a fortune is not a practice that arouses enthusiasm in France, and in 1872 those who had anything left after the war with Prussia decided that one of the best ways of keeping it was to train "experts in government."

This costs money because only experts can train experts and they charge high for their knowledge.

The *Ecole des Sciences Politiques* pays no dividends, but it does turn out competent men. Nor was his professorship there the only honor that came to Tardieu in 1902. Simultaneously, he was appointed to the staff of *Le Temps*, France's celebrated semi-official afternoon newspaper, sometimes called—and not always politely—"the Bible of the Republic." As Foreign Editor of *Le Temps*, to quote André Siegfried, an authority on French politics, "Tardieu had more power than a Minister." Given his ability at expression, writing in *Le Temps* he could disturb even government policy. Never given to neglecting an opportunity, Tardieu proceeded to do just this.

He was to coin that classic phrase, "a humiliation without precedent," and under the following circumstances. In 1905 the Germans had sent their Kaiser to Tangiers where he had made a speech emphasizing German dissatisfaction with the colonial situation. Would the French, with England behind them, fight or yield? No one knew, but everyone wanted to know. Europe was on tiptoe with

apprehension. War was just around the corner, a good place for it to stay, many thought, among them the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Theophile Delcassé, a heavily mustached man hunched over his desk at the Quai d'Orsay. On his desk lay a telegram, deciphered by his staff.

All telegrams sent or received in France are at the disposition of the government, as the Germans knew. So they used a code. But the code was known. As the French were to learn years later through an indiscretion, this particular telegram from the German Ambassador in Paris, Radolin, to the German Foreign Minister, Bernhard von Buelow, showed that the French Premier, Maurice Rouvier, was prepared to force Delcassé out of office because he was trying to bring about an English alliance. Trusting in the word of King Edward VII, Delcassé was in favor of facing down the Germans.

The comments of the Kaiser and von Buelow are now known, and the manner in which they were communicated to Rouvier.

A long story, it made Tardieu famous.

The dismissal of Delcassé at the instance of the Germans he described in effective terms. Taken up by Clemenceau, the phrase, "a humiliation without precedent," became his so far as foreigners were concerned. For Parisians, it remained Tardieu's, and they began watching him. Frequently in the smart restaurants and at other meeting places, blessed with an incisive wit, a gift for epithet, Tardieu used words that long white teeth bit short just at the right moment. So he was popular with the witty. While he stooped and wore thick glasses, he liked good company and grinned agreeably, especially at foreigners, for he was proud of his English.

"And he can sing," Madame Sarah Bernhardt once told me, "or at least so this pretty infant says," she added, introducing me to a blue-eyed, blonde protégée of hers, a pretty girl, whom she was training for the stage.

It was a gift for negotiating notes of another kind that brought Tardieu to New York in 1916 as head of the French Commission.

Borrowing heavily, buying intelligently, he was welcome company, for he had been an officer on the staffs both of Marshal Joffre and of Marshal Foch and had seen operations from a vantage point. As few did, he knew how things really stood; so many people with millions at stake welcomed him at their tables. Back in France, meanwhile, Clemenceau grew impatient, laying down a barrage of insult that at times must have been hard to bear. But Tardieu stuck it out, using both intelligence and force to keep supplies moving steadily and as quickly as possible toward France.

His reward was a place beside Clemenceau at the conference.

He helped write the Versailles Treaty and then worked for Clemenceau's election as President of the Republic. But after the old man retired, making an Achilles' tent of his simple apartment on the Rue Franklin in Paris, sulking obviously, Tardieu decided that his whole allegiance was no longer due to a man who had given up fighting. Feeling as he did and despite Clemenceau's dislike of the former President, Tardieu then accepted a ministry from Poincaré. Frequently Minister of the Interior, where he had control of the prefects and the police and hence could superintend elections, Tardieu over a period of years was also Minister of War and three times Premier. From February to June, 1932, he was Premier and at the same time Minister of Foreign Affairs.

His foreign policy was simplicity itself.

It was to build up the French production system and at the same time find a market for the goods the French produced. One market, he saw, lay along the Danube valley, among the allies France needed in the East. First to foresee the coming of Hitler, unlike most politicians Tardieu realized that the German dictator's real attack would be with words rather than guns. By frightening the democracies into arming, he would stampede them into imposing back-breaking taxes that in turn would create social disturbances. To meet such an attack, Tardieu proposed giving the League of Nations an international army that all would support. With this guarantee, the French and their allies could have withstood a pro-

paganda that kept them in a continual state of nerves, and, incidentally, sold newspapers wholesale.

The failure of the British to co-operate made an international army impossible, however. Instead of this, they proposed disarmament. Rejecting disarmament as insane, Tardieu continued to build the system of fortifications on the German border that was named the Maginot Line in honor of a Minister of War who had served in the trenches. At the same time, putting an end to Briand's policy of surrender to the Germans, Tardieu developed a new foreign minister in Pierre Laval. A cunning peacemaker both at home and abroad, this former Socialist showed himself in favor of reaching an understanding with the Germans if possible, but above all with the Italians. Meanwhile, both he and Tardieu underwrote business and so employment to such an extent that the Poincaré boom continued. But they faced a problem when Herriot succeeded them.

The Hoover moratorium had ended German reparation payments and Herriot was forced to agree to this sacrifice of French interests. When he lost power because he not only gave up reparation payments, but also wanted to pay the American debt, other leaders of the Radical Socialists, notably Chautemps and Daladier, took his place, and the career of Tardieu from then on was a fight to force these men from power. Representative of the moderate center, he combined with the conservatives on the right of the Chamber and together they worked to build up French defense. •

A scandal gave them their opportunity. Late in December, 1933, the newspapers revealed that a man named Alexander Stavisky, the son of Jewish immigrants from Poland, had been floating forged bonds and dividing the proceeds with men politically influential. Charged long before with fraud and released on bail, Stavisky had never been brought to trial and his suicide only increased suspicion that the Premier, Camille Chautemps, was shielding the man supposed to be responsible for the favors shown Stavisky.

This man was Chautemps' brother-in-law, the Attorney General, George Pressard. Gradually the charges against him began to arouse the people, and nothing was done to appease them. Determined to maintain their hold on power, Chautemps, Daladier, and Herriot—by now very much in the background—with Leon Blum and his Socialists behind them, refused to do anything until finally charges and counter-charges, made openly in Parliament and widely printed, brought on a popular revolt. Led by the organized Fascist and Royalist armies, the people literally poured into the streets. Getting rough in their efforts to restrain the populace, the police increased ill feeling until finally on February sixth, 1934, Paris was filled with rioting mobs. That day the Place de la Concorde was jammed with people, and toward five in the afternoon the firing began. Many were killed and many more were wounded.

The next day a peacemaker was called to Paris, the former President, Gaston Doumergue, and it was to Doumergue, with feeling still hovering round the fury point, that the President, Albert Lebrun, entrusted the difficult business of restoring order in France. But Doumergue as Premier was no more than a name. While he included Herriot and Marshal Pétain in his cabinet, he was guided from the first by André Tardieu. Internationally, what Tardieu wanted to do was still to strengthen Czecho-Slovakia and France's other Eastern allies, a policy the new Foreign Secretary, Louis Barthou, carried out. Nationally, what Tardieu wanted was a reform of the constitution that would put an end to that government "from below" that Herriot—and successors of Herriot such as Chautemps and Daladier—represented.

This campaign for reform Tardieu began by attacking Chautemps. Taking the stand before the committee investigating the Stavisky scandal, he made accusations so specific that parliamentarians were outraged.

This sort of thing "just isn't done in France, except by sectarians like the Royalist, Maurras," a horrified Radical Socialist explained to me. Other politicians, whatever their party, felt much

as he did. "But all these parties!" a young American student exclaimed to me once. "There are so many of them, and their names are so long—just trying to remember them gives me a pain in the neck," she complained, an affliction with which I sympathized. But, as a matter of fact, it was easily cured.

There were only three parties in France, really: the Right, the Center, and the Left.

The way the Left was divided up into smaller groups was typical of the other parties. In the Left, there were three main parties, with minor affiliations. Every time anyone of any importance became sincerely annoyed, he founded his own party. But he remained, nevertheless, affiliated with the main group. So, on the Left, there were the Radical Socialists, the Socialists, and the Communists. All had minor affiliates. But all represented what André Siegfried called "the little people."

The Right represented the big industrial and banking interests, and was Catholic, strongly so.

The Center was less so. While it was Catholic, it represented moderation. By and large, it was a toned down reflection of the Right. But it was always sufficiently moderate to co-operate with the Radicals, if the Radicals talked what the Center called "sense." In one respect, moreover, parties in France differed very little. Being in politics in France was like belonging to a club. Everyone was supposed to be a good fellow. No one was supposed to tell on another politician as frankly as Tardieu did. And Tardieu had just begun! "Getting elected," he wrote in books that attracted wide attention, "is the politician's first consideration; then getting re-elected."

This fact hampered Premiers who made defense, not elections, a first consideration. Such a Premier, Tardieu insisted, should be allowed to dissolve Parliament, and take his case, "then and there, while the issue was hot," to the people before its meaning had been obscured. What could be more democratic? In addition, any proposal to spend money should originate with the Premier, not with

parties or individual deputies. While this suggestion was eventually adopted, the other constitutional changes Tardieu proposed threw the deputies into a panic, and when Doumergue supported them by speaking over the radio, they made fun of "Gastounet's" southern accent.

This drew a laugh, diverting the issue, but it was the Socialist, Leon Blum, who pointed the revolt of the politicians. As he said, the deputies would think twice before they voted against a Premier who had the authority to dissolve Parliament. As he wrote, "the prospect of fighting a new and costly election campaign against an authoritative government, with secret funds, and the press and the radio at its disposal, is not an attractive one." What he meant by "an authoritative government" was the fact that France is run by its civil servants.

The particular civil servants whom Blum had in mind were the police and the prefects. As I have said, the prefects governed the departments. While these departments were units like American states, they were supervised from Paris by the Minister of the Interior, who directed the prefects and the police. Through them, the Minister could affect even elections. But the elections could also be affected by the "secret funds," money voted the government for which the government did not have to account.

This money the government could distribute among journalists and so influence opinion. In addition, the government controlled the radio, and, as Blum pointed out, these advantages would remain in the control of the Premier who dissolved Parliament because his ministry would remain in office during the elections. In addition, the campaign would tend to become a fight between the friends and enemies of the Premier. Interest would be centered on a person, not a policy, the Socialist leader concluded, influencing not only the Socialists by his argument, but even the Radicals, and so much so that Herriot, after agreeing to Tardieu's proposal that civil servants, now organized in a union, should be forbidden to strike, finally decided that party considerations were more impor-



tant than a reform of the constitution. Casting in his lot with Laval and Flandin, Herriot helped bring Doumergue and so Tardieu down. Defeated, Tardieu retired from politics.

He was going to write history, he said. But would he marry at last, this famous *bon vivant*, once supposedly engaged to an American? Possible brides were named. Along with others, he had been seen dining with the beautiful Mary Marquet of the Comédie Française, the government theater, and with the charming young actress, Meg Lemonnier. Such company excites comment, but for Tardieu the gay days in Paris were over. Presently he married a woman of his own age, a former schoolteacher wealthy like himself, and went to live in Menton on the French Riviera, where he unsheathed his pen.

He had a dramatic story to tell: his days at the front with Foch, whom he described as the ablest commander since Napoleon; his days at the Peace Conference with Clemenceau.

His account of what really went on there forced governments to reveal the facts. In the meantime, events in Paris had proved what Tardieu had claimed for constitutional reform, that it would permit continuity of policy, concentrating attention on defense. Tardieu had always been close to the bankers, the chieftains of heavy industry, and the munition makers, but he had aligned their activities with French defense, and when he was defeated both defense and Big Business lost an able advocate. But who cared? Only a few! Unfortunately, Tardieu, often contemptuous of stupidity, offended lesser men, and when they forced his retirement in 1936 they did no more than defend their bargaining power. If Tardieu had had his way, these lesser politicians would no longer have been able to bring down ministries and threaten Big Business, as Doumergue's successor, Pierre Etienne Flandin, did. Well over six feet tall, blond and a Norman descended from the Norwegian Vikings, Flandin belonged to the same moderate party to which Tardieu had once belonged.

These parties in the center, where such men as François Pietri and Paul Reynaud were also prominent, held the balance of power up to 1936. Neither too conservative nor too Catholic, they were a check both on the Left and the Right. To Herriot and his hearties who kept assuring the people that it would always be Christmas, they said, "Take care, boys, be careful." To the extreme conservatives, led by the white haired Louis Marin, who believed that God was not in his Heaven unless all was Right with the world, these moderates said, "Don't go too far." But the Right did go too far in 1934. Pushed by Marin, advised by Tardieu, schemed against by Laval and Flandin, Doumergue fell. As it was obvious from this that government "from above" was still unpopular in France, Flandin, when he took over, decided to avoid anything that suggested it. But he did not play his cards tactfully. Tact was not his strong point.

He was to distinguish himself in 1938 by telegraphing Hitler, congratulating him on his success at Munich, but when he became Premier in November, 1934, he was to distinguish himself in another way, by a youthful obstinacy that proved disastrous. Only forty-six at the time, Flandin refused either to devalue or deflate, though prices were obviously too high.

This do-nothing policy brought him into conflict with the governors of the Bank of France. Officially known as the Regents, they wanted deflation. Soon Flandin was openly at odds with them. Presently he accused the press of taking their part. Soon he was accusing everyone who opposed him of having a sinister purpose—a lack of tact that aroused considerable feeling. How people felt was shown clearly enough when Flandin met with an accident, for his broken arm provoked the remark that "he would miss it more than he would his head," and few failed to smile when they heard this remark repeated.

The Premiership, when Flandin was turned out, was taken, after a brief interval, by Pierre Laval, the independent Senator who had

formerly worked hand in glove with Tardieu, only to split with him over the question of constitutional reform. But once in power himself, Laval demanded and got dictatorial powers. With these lending effect to his wishes, he proceeded to re-establish the government "from above" that had defended France under Clemenceau, and, to a lesser extent, under Poincaré, a convert despite himself to the form of government that had come to an end temporarily under Doumergue. Small, Oriental-looking, with slim hands and wiry hair, Laval was from Auvergne. Auvergne is a section of the country, not a department or city, and Laval was one of those Auvergnats whose commercial abilities led the French to say "one Auvergnat was equal to two Jews." However this may have been, Laval worked his way up from nothing.

"To what?" one of his enemies asked caustically.

"To such good cheer as multi-millionaires can afford," the American correspondent, Wythe Williams, answered dryly, "and to the Premiership of France."

They did not like Laval, these enemies of his. Though they approved the fact that he had studied law while driving a delivery wagon, though they applauded his entry into politics as an agitator so extreme that the police kept track of him when the war broke out in 1914, they resented what followed, for Laval, like Millerand, turned his coat. Drolly enough, in view of his past, he settled down in time as an attorney for Big Business. Next, society intrigued him, according to his critics. In any event, after making a fortune and accepting a title from the Pope, he married his pretty daughter, Josée, to Comte René de Chambrun, son of General Adelbert de Chambrun.

This young man was well known in America. Descended from Lafayette, as such he was an hereditary citizen of the United States where his father had been military attaché. His mother was Clara Longworth, sister of Nicholas Longworth, once Speaker of the House of Representatives and husband of Theodore Roosevelt's daughter, Alice. But while all this was "socially important" and

pleasant for the young de Chambruns when they came to America, it was not what mattered about Laval. In fact, only two things really mattered about the Senator.

They can be briefly described. Internationally, what mattered was Laval's friendly attitude toward Mussolini and even Germany. Nationally, what mattered was the fact that, as Premier, Laval cut salaries, but could not bring prices down.

. This brought on a revolt. With their pay cut, the poor could not buy enough, so they voted in 1936 for that combination of Radicals, Socialists and Communists known as the Popular Front. Formed to resist the invasion of men's personal liberty by great economic groups dominated by the Regents of the Bank of France, the Popular Front made Leon Blum Premier, and with Blum the revolution began. But it did not last. Blum drove Mussolini into the arms of Hitler and this endangered France, so the fight for personal liberty was temporarily suspended. If the revolution failed, however, and Blum failed with it, he did not fail entirely.

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## IV

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### Blum and Revolution

THE average man in France wrote down Leon Blum as a failure because he failed politically. Politically he stood for disarmament just as Tardieu stood for armament, and events showed that Tardieu was right. But this did not dispose of Blum. Because his gifts were not primarily political was no reason for disregarding them, no excuse for diverting attention from them, as the journalist, Henri Béraud did, when he insisted that Blum was born in Bulgaria—a red herring, if there ever was one, drawn across the trail of obvious fact.

There is no question that Blum grew up in France, in the very heart of Paris, and that he was educated there. But education is of several sorts. Born in 1872, early in life he was committed by his grandmother to the business of bringing on a revolution. According to his authorized biography, she told him that if she had not had children to bring up she would have killed Napoleon III. While young Leon's father was rich, a manufacturer of ribbons whose welfare depended upon an established social order undisturbed by assassination, at home his son was pledged to rebellion. At school he showed this by running away. Later, at that high testing ground of French education, the Ecole Normale, young Blum failed twice in examinations, leaving after what his appointed biographers describe as "a gentle hint" from the director.

His experiences there and at the Sorbonne are more sharply defined by a distinguished member of the French Academy, André

Bellessort, who, in a public address, called Blum, then Premier of France, "a foreigner," "*vieil esthète méprisable, raté littéraire, jadis congédié de l'Ecole Normale et rayé des examens de la Sorbonne.*" In excusing his academic failures, Blum's own biographers state that at this period of his young life he developed perhaps too pronounced an interest in amateur theatricals, where he took women's parts, and in dancing and in girls. Blum himself says that "he believed at that time that happiness consisted in arousing the curiosity of young women and the enthusiasm of young men."

This tendency of his was noticed by others.

"Who, that one?" Whistler snapped when asked who Blum, or, more exactly, who "that prancing dandy" might be. "That," the great painter answered, "is the village cut-up," George Moore told me.

This tendency to show off created a prejudice against the young man, but his failure to maintain his academic standing was taken more seriously in France than perhaps it would be elsewhere. For this there was a reason. Education in France had a double purpose, to educate in the ordinary sense of the term, and to commit the young to a belief in the Republic established after the Prussian War. So any deviation from the prescribed route was regarded as dangerous. However, young Leon's interests were varied and he was not without ability.

He soon recovered from a bad start. Bringing to the business of writing an unusually mature point of view he impressed even such veterans as Anatole France and Maurice Barrès. In a well-known review, he was to deal with subjects as wide apart as the theater and the races.

His real bid for fame came when he published his *New Conversations with Eckermann*, where he puts words into Goethe's mouth. As his apologists remark, this was a daring thing to do.

It was, and it set a fashion. Since then there have been several of Blum's persuasion who have attempted to interpret great personages whom they understood even less well than Blum under-

stood Goethe. With Stendhal, however, Blum was more at home. Not only did he write of him, he followed his example, entering the Conseil d'Etat, the judicial body in France that advises on the wording of legislation and acts as arbiter in disputes between the citizen and the state.

There he was to stay until he went into politics, when, in order to earn a living, he became a lawyer.

The law was not the only way of assuring his future that he had in mind, however. As friends made clear to him, Socialism was a doctrine intended to deliver into the hands of the politicians all the economic and financial resources of a nation. Here was a prize worth winning, but, as Jaurès had shown, it could be won only by orators. Only convincing speakers could affect the vote, and elections now decided the destiny of France. But how to convince the voters? The way to do this was obvious to Jaurès and his board of strategy.

The general sentiment of the French was against war.

The hatred of conscription was widespread. At the same time the great industrialists and their bankers were deeply engaged in the business of making armaments. Here was a large target! Insisting that disarmament meant peace, Jaurès preached disarmament. Leader of the French Socialists before the war, Jean Jaurès drew his ideas largely from German sources, borrowing from Luther, Kant, Hegel and Karl Marx. His speeches bristle with praise of everything German, so much so that at a meeting Gabriel Séailles finally shouted, "Just remember, will you, Jaurès, that there is such a thing as French Socialism." But despite Séailles, Jaurès persisted. Despite Jules Guesde, the Socialist who denounced Jaurès as "a traitor," and an opposition typified by the Foreign Minister, Stephen Pichon, who called Jaurès "the orator of Germany in the French Parliament," Jaurès had his way.

He convinced the voters that the German Socialists would never allow the Kaiser to make war, and in the 1914 elections in May the voters authorized Jaurès to disarm France.

This plea for disarmament was taken up by Blum after the war. Because they lacked men sufficiently well educated to deal with the conservative leaders, the Socialists chose Blum to guide them and he analysed correctly the feeling of the public. The people were sick of war. To Briand's demands for disarmament Blum brought effective reinforcement. Years later, when Hitler seized Czecho-Slovakia, Blum's record, like Briand's, made curious reading. Despite the warnings of the venerable Poincaré and Tardieu, Blum voted against building the Maginot Line and saw that his party did so. At the same time he demanded the reduction to six months of the time young men had to serve in the army. In addition, he asked the suppression of the period during which men were recalled to the colors and trained.

He also wanted a massive cut in military appropriations. In 1930, he insisted that France disarm, whatever other nations did. Having praised the evacuation of the Rhineland, at the moment when Hitler reoccupied it he voted against keeping young men in the army for two years, and he persuaded his party to vote as he did.

These were the lean years. Because of the war, the birthrate had fallen off.

There were fewer men for the army.

The few there were, Tardieu reminded Blum, were badly needed, and others sharpened this protest till it fairly sizzled with invective.

The Socialist leader's record in respect to foreign affairs also drew a barrage of comment. While Germany was still a Socialist republic, Blum was in favor of lending Germany money. But he was against loans to Yugoslavia and Poland, loans that would have been spent in France for armaments with which to keep the Germans in line. Nor was this all that Blum tried to do for the Germans.

He was in favor at the time of allowing Germany and Austria to unite.



He was against the rule of both Dolfuss and Schuschnigg in Austria and against the restoration of the Hapsburgs. On the eve of his assassination at Marseilles, King Alexander of Yugoslavia was bitterly assailed by Blum's paper. Later, with Hitler rapidly consolidating his power, Blum became Premier.

This was in 1936. As Premier, Blum brought feeling against France to a head. Having alienated Italy, aroused the suspicions of the Swiss, and made Belgium an avowed neutral instead of an ally of France, Blum turned to Spain, where he embittered the Republicans. Refusing to go to the assistance of the struggling Spanish republic, he offended General Franco as well, missing two birds with one stone, a diplomatic accomplishment unique in after-war politics. Observing the result of Blum's activity, the Belgian government declared itself independent of France and no longer an ally.

The more Blum surrounded France with enemies and lukewarm neutrals the more bitterly he was called to account at home, nor did he defend himself so well as had been expected. As a young man among friends, willing butts most of them, his ironical wit had been much remarked. As a writer, he was safe from heckling. But in the Chamber of Deputies, the in-fighting began. As an irreverent American put it, "In that cock-pit his enemies took hold of his short back hair and twisted."

This treatment, and especially the laughter Blum's slightly effeminate gestures provoked, did not please him. Frequently he lost his temper, shouting once, in that high-pitched voice of his, at the Center and Right, "I hate you!" While he was never allowed to forget that ill-advised admission, his enemies were forced to admit that the clarity of his exposition remained effective so long as he was criticizing the work of others.

It was another story when Blum himself was called on to rule. After the 1936 election, as chief of the Popular Front "he was practically forced" by the President, Albert Lebrun, to assume the responsibility of governing, according to stories told at the time.

However true this may be, there is no question that he realized now how much easier it is to destroy than to build. As Premier, true enough, he raised salaries. But despite the formal assurance of his Finance Minister, Vincent Auriol, he also devalued the franc. Of course, if a government announced that it was going to devalue, everyone would send money abroad. With fifteen hundred francs a Frenchman could have bought twenty pounds or one hundred dollars when Laval was Premier. With this hundred dollars later on, Frenchmen could have bought more than three thousand francs, doubling their money. But only a few did this, because only a few knew Blum was going to devalue.

The average man did not know how to take advantage of devaluation. Left to pay the costs of this capital levy, hearing how insiders had profited from it, people throughout France began to check up on what Blum had done. If Laval had cut wages ten percent, he had not brought prices down. But he and Tardieu and Poincaré had all spent more on improving living conditions and stimulating employment than Blum had. Since Jaurès, however, no one in politics had indicted so completely, so brilliantly, as Blum had the treatment of labor in France, where the middleman and the great financial interests took far more than their share. In consequence, the workers expected not only a new deal, but a great deal when that combination of political parties known as the Popular Front took charge with Blum as Premier, an office given him because he was the leader of the Socialists, the largest party in the Popular Front, a combination made up of the Radicals, led by Daladier, and the Communists, led by Maurice Thorez and Gabriel Peri.

It had been formed to fight Fascism and resist that invasion of men's personal liberty, engineered by the banks and the industrialists and represented by low pay and high prices. But, specifically, what good did Blum and the Popular Front do the workman? True enough, they raised wages, but devaluation took the gold value, the real value out of this increase. In addition, the cost of

labor and materials, due to forced increases in pay, shorter hours of work, and other circumstances, pushed prices up, some of them as much as seventy-five percent. As a result, sales fell off disastrously abroad, and also at home where the workman could no longer buy as much with devaluated money as he had been able to buy with a franc that Laval maintained at fifteen to the dollar.

It was now declining slowly toward forty to the dollar. At the same time, in the East, across the border, Hitler "was marshaling his slaves" in shifts that worked anywhere from two to three hours where the French were working one, and Germany was the enemy that mattered most to the French. In consequence, no estimate of Blum's program has any meaning that is not considered in relation to what Hitler was doing. Nationalizing the production of airplanes, Blum permitted conditions that left France without an effective air fleet when the German Fuehrer issued his call to Munich in September, 1938. As that distinguished officer, General Maurice Duval, wrote in the December fifteenth, 1938, number of the *Revue de Paris*, in so far as French airplanes were concerned, "everything had to be done over." Nor had pilots been trained in any great number.

The reaction to all this was inevitable and reached its height at the end of May, 1939, at the convention of the Socialist party. At that time, Blum had been out of power over a year.

His first government had lasted from June, 1936, to June, 1937, his second, set up in March, 1938, had survived only a month. Meeting in their convention at Nantes over a year later, the Socialists, now at odds with the Radical Socialists, and ready to split with the Communists, found that their troubles had only begun, for they were divided among themselves, and were being called on to choose between Blum, still officially their leader, and Paul Faure, the party's secretary, a competent political organizer. By now Blum had had a change of heart. He was in favor of implementing aggressive action against the totalitarian powers. France was ready now. Thanks to Daladier, she was armed.

This Paul Faure realized. But he was against war. As secretary of the Socialist party, he had great influence and he stood for a policy of appeasement, one that came very near to being a policy of "peace at any price." Demanding a conference that would accord "economic justice" to the Germans and the Italians, Faure forced the issue and won over Blum by a big majority. While everyone at the end ostensibly kissed (literally kissed!) and made up, such political kisses are meaningless.

They lack the romantic flavor. And warmth! So, "Kiss as you like," astute political observers wrote, "the fact is, Blum is finished." Soon, throughout France, the average man was echoing this conclusion.

There was considerable truth in it. But it was far from the whole truth. For what did Blum's opponents, and the judicious, charge? That he failed politically, that he could not govern men! Unquestionably, this was true. He had not been able to control his own following in 1936 as the sit-down strikes that stopped work on the Paris exposition revealed. In addition, he had disarmed while Germany rearmed, slowed down French production, made enemies out of France's natural allies. All this is true, but it is not all the truth, for, if Blum failed as an active revolutionist, he did not fail as a propagandist.

He wrote for years. Saying well what many wanted to hear, he was widely read. That he said nothing exceptional does not alter the fact that he said it exceptionally well. Furthermore, critics overlook his object, "the reconstruction of society." To rebuild, however, you must first destroy, and this Blum set out to do by attacking the groundwork of any social structure, its moral code. From the first his purpose was clear.

He began by resurrecting Goethe. Putting words into the great German's mouth—"a piece of unparalleled impudence," to quote George Moore—Blum was obviously aware that Weimar's prince of letters wept over the troubles of the stocking-weavers at Apolda. But this French revolutionist conveniently forgot what Goethe

thought of the French Revolution. To Goethe the principles of the French Revolution were so many profound absurdities.

The great German picked out three for special attack: Equality; Government of the People by the People; and Political Freedom. As he reminded his friends, equality simply does not exist. As for government, who is to protect the many from the many? Furthermore, no man can be free, he held, except relatively. What is needed, therefore, is just enough government to allow men to go about their business.

This fact Blum disregards, and his attempt to use Goethe for political purposes Blum supplemented by issuing his own critical writings in book form.

These show his preoccupation with revolution, his sympathy with such attacks on society as Stendhal made in France. Now Stendhal was a blind partisan, an admirer of Napoleon. Like Blum's grandmother, he justified excess. Expressing himself through his favorite character, Julien Sorel in *Le Rouge et Le Noir*, he showed that he, too, believed in murder as a relief for injured feelings, and this belief, as many emphasized, ran counter to the Christian ethic.

It was when he wrote his next book, a book about peace, that Blum met with more general approval, for Blum was in favor of peace, though he was anything but specific as to how to get it and keep it. Favoring Internationalism in a land of Nationalists, he opposed Fascism. But Fascism was the dominant doctrine in Italy and Spain, and to be really independent France had to have these two Latin neighbors with her. Offending them made France more than ever dependent on England. But it was not only here that Blum revealed the gulf that separated him from the Nationalists in France.

It was when he wrote a book on government that he showed clearly how deep the ravine was that separated him from the representatives of the vested interests. Thanks to the constitution, they had been able to defend themselves, to re-establish from time

to time government "from above" in France. But Blum was against this. As an orator, dependent on the popular vote, he showed the same prejudice that Demosthenes did, for he was in favor of abolishing the Senate and other checks on "the will of the people." At the same time, he was against an increased birth rate.

This question, dear to Stendhal, Blum treated in a book called *Marriage*, or *Du Mariage* in French. First published in 1907 and republished and translated with Blum's permission later on, "this frank sweeping away of inhibitions and hypocrisies," to quote its admirers, touched a problem vital to France. Stating the case for "free love fully and effectively," the argument is studded with sensational statements, "but it should be remembered that these statements are inherently sensational, that the author is only being frank." Furthermore, the book's critics were reminded, Blum spoke as a man who had married happily and who adored his children, circumstances cited as proof of his theory.

It was his theory that men should not marry until they are thirty-five, women not before they are thirty. And before that, what are young people to do? What Blum advocates is that women as well as men should sow wild oats in their youth. This done, they will know what they want when they marry. As a result, there will be more happy marriages, fewer divorces, Blum insists, and with this theory many in France agreed. Unfortunately, Blum runs into difficulty when he goes into detail. For example, in a famous passage he says that "virginity gaily and early thrown away would no longer exercise that singular constraint that is made up of modesty, dignity and a sort of fear." "At fifteen," he writes on page 267 of the French edition of *Du Mariage*, "not only are the majority of girls perfectly prepared to taste the sweets of love, but there is hardly any period where they would be better disposed to enjoy it." On page 315 he explains that young girls should be initiated into the purposes and gestures of love, not by young husbands, but "by men of middle age, experienced and practiced." On page 82 he has already said that he sees nothing repugnant in

incest, reminding us that "it is natural and frequent for brother and sister to love each other." But "it is not necessary," he assures us, to carry such physical contacts to excess. Returning to the subject of older men, he says that they can be relied on to teach young girls both personal hygiene and the use of contraceptives. Illegitimate and unwanted children should be cared for by the state.

This question of contraceptives brought Blum into conflict with the Roman Catholic Church which had more than five million practicing adherents in France. Blum met this attack squarely, insisting that "it is neither more difficult nor more shocking to learn how to avoid having children than to learn how to have them." Unfortunately, he reminds us, civilization is so managed that abandoned women are forced, in order to live, to accept more men than they want, while other women are deprived by custom and hypocrisy of their just due. In reaching this conclusion, he returns to ground where he is at home. Society is at fault. Appealing to women, he capitalizes a widespread feeling that things are not as they should be.

The attacks on him in France were due partially to this book, but only partially. While his attitude toward chastity seemed deplorable to many in a land where young women were supposed to come virgins to the altar, he was not the only political writer who let in an amazing amount of light on this troubled question. In his *Liaisons Dangereuses*, Choderlos de Laclos showed what happened under the monarchy when women, "ready to marry at fifteen," were shut up before marriage, but were left free to do as they pleased after they were married. Blum, certainly, is less shocking than Laclos. But Blum's theory of marriage furnished only part of the argument advanced against him. While school girls buying his book in secret worried French mothers, the middle classes as well as the wealthy were to be worried even more by his economic policy.

This was intended to favor the working people in the industrialized cities. Failing to benefit this special class, it penalized

the thrifty, however moderate their means. Every time the franc was lowered in value and hence in purchasing power, savings, which were listed in francs, were lowered in value to an equal extent.

This was confiscation, a capital levy. But what lent added "venom and intensity" to the campaign against Blum among the millions who saved their bit in France was the degree to which he brought Jews into the government—a just charge, for the number of Jews in Blum's government, especially in the lesser offices, was out of all proportion to their numerical strength in France. But what Blum's opponents often forget is that the conservative Jews in France were as much opposed to this policy as the Christians were.

They both undoubtedly backed George Mandel, a Jew like Blum, but as conservative as Blum was revolutionary. As a former lieutenant of Clemenceau and one of the ablest political executives in France, Mandel was as much responsible as Joseph Caillaux was for bringing Blum's reign to an end. But Mandel could not prevent the rebirth of anti-Semitism in France. Dating, as it did, from Voltaire, this movement had its own authorities. Revived during the Dreyfus case, it died down slowly only to come to life again with Blum. Signs of this revival were plentiful.

It will suffice to cite two. Following Blum's ascendancy, a significant book appeared, *Bagatelle pour un Massacre*, by the distinguished writer and physician, Dr. Louis Ferdinand Celine. Dealing with the Jews not only in France but in Hollywood, it was full of assertion and rumor. Incredibly vulgar as well, it sold amazingly, nevertheless. So did issues of the weekly, *Je Suis Partout*, edited by Pierre Gaxotte and Robert Brasillach, and devoted to what they described as "the truth about the Jews." Of course, Brasillach was young and an enthusiast carried away by his emotions at times, as his praise of Charlie Chaplin showed. But Gaxotte was a distinguished historian.

He lent authority to the attacks he sponsored, so elsewhere, too, they took on a sharper quality, a matter I shall deal with more



fully in discussing the Munich agreements. Feeling increased at that time, and Gaxotte, among others, was anything but just to the Jews, a circumstance that led the Daladier government to issue a decree extending special protection to French Jews and to refugees, an edict that might never have been necessary, many felt, if it had not been for Blum. But if some objected to Blum on this count, many more lost faith in him because of the way devaluation robbed workers of purchasing power. Blum was attacked most of all, however, and most successfully because his attitude toward defense had exposed France to invasion.

This question of national defense was one to which everything else related. If France were invaded, personal liberty would be at an end. So France came first. Defense was a first consideration, a fact Blum disregarded in favor of international considerations. But Blum was not the only victim of the savage battle waged to restore military, economic and social order in France. Beaten up for attempting to drive through, or approach—stories differ—the funeral procession following the body of the Royalist and historian, Jacques Bainville, to the grave, Blum was injured. But this attack was nothing compared to the one made on Blum's Minister of the Interior, Roger Salengro. Where Blum was invulnerable, Salengro proved vulnerable. Blum had survived references to his relations with various wealthy industrialists and a well-known department store. Pointed questions had been asked as to the connection of Blum's son with an automobile concern, but these investigations added up to very little. In the end, because they could not get at Blum, his enemies searched the record of his friends. Led by Horace Carbuccia, who used his weekly paper, *Gringoire*, with a circulation of more than half a million, and used it like a club, Blum's opponents finally concentrated attention on Salengro.

The campaign grew in intensity every week. At Carbuccia's disposal were extensive sources of information, for he was the son-in-law of Jean Chiappe, formerly Prefect of Police. Chiappe undoubtedly knew a great deal that others did not want known.

Information gained in high places was used for political purposes. Even officers were called on to testify against Salengro. But for those who knew this simple and straightforward man, it was difficult to believe that he had been a deserter during the war. And yet this charge, never by any means fully proved, drove Salengro to suicide.

The envenomed intensity of this attack had really little to do with Salengro. More than anything else, it was due to Blum's attitude toward defense. Because they could not get at Blum, as I have said, they got at Salengro. With Hitler constantly arming, any weapon seemed justified. To the Nationalists warring on Blum, anything seemed fair. Furthermore, armaments aside, if France were to survive, the French must reproduce, and Blum had shown clearly that he was for late marriages, marriages always notably unproductive, and in favor of restricting births at any age if individuals so desired. Here not only the Nationalists but the Church was against him. In safeguarding the family and the home, in teaching men and women that they have a duty far more important than their own pleasure, that we cannot live for ourselves alone because we are not alone in the world—in emphasising these truths the Church took a stand that meant France's salvation.

This attitude was traditional, but it was also unique. Among religious organizations in France, only the Roman Catholic Church had stood constantly for large families. Powerful among Protestants, the Free Masons did nothing to revise conditions that restricted the birth rate, though it was as obvious to them as it was to others that the French would cease to exist as a nation if the birth rate continued to fall. Though they knew that this question was at the heart of the whole question of defense, they dodged it. But if they did not bring Blum down because of his failure to face it, they did provide his successor.

He was succeeded by Chautemps.

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# V

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## Chautemps and the Masons

"THE switch back," as it was called by those who tormented it with unfavorable comment, "the reversal of form," "the turn to the Right" that meant a more conservative conception of government than Blum's had been, came when Camille Chautemps succeeded the Socialist Premier. For Chautemps this was a vindication. At the time of the Stavisky scandal in January, 1934, he had been forced to resign as Premier because mobs were milling through the streets, shouting, "Down with the thieves!" Chautemps' brother-in-law, George Pressard, had been the Attorney-General, a permanent appointment in France, who was responsible for prosecutions. But was the immunity that Stavisky enjoyed really Pressard's fault? Many refused to believe it.

The impression that Pressard had been kept in the dark by his own staff was strengthened when one of his aides was found dead on the railroad tracks near Dijon and unprejudiced observers concluded that he had committed suicide. But because he held out against a parliamentary investigation that would have been used for political purposes, Chautemps had to go. Before he went, however, he offered an impressive defense, gave an exhibition of how to speak that afterward served as an example to politicians. For this he was rewarded three years later. In 1934 Chautemps had been openly accused of having connived at murder, of having pushed the police into killing both Stavisky and Prince, Pressard's subordinate who died, apparently a suicide, on the tracks near

Dijon. But if, in answering these charges, Chautemps spoke softly, like Theodore Roosevelt he carried a big stick.

This stick was the Masonic organization of which Chautemps was a member. From the time of Louis XV, the Free Masons had been powerful in France. Originally an association of artisans, it adapted to its services and meetings certain Christian rites, and around these developed a secrecy that both impressed outsiders and annoyed them. But whatever their reactions, they were forced to admit that the Masonic order was pledged to support recognized moral teachings. If it left to the individual wide latitude in his judgments, it advised him to co-operate with the prevailing religion in whatever land he lived.

This was obvious in England, but in Catholic France another church was the crown's ally, and the Roman Catholic Church had always been critical of Masonry's secret commitments. Furthermore, Louis XV was critical on his own account of Masonry's efforts to advise him. As His Most Christian and Most Catholic Majesty realized, many Englishmen had been concerned in establishing Masonry in France, and their purpose was plain. At the time France was the most powerful country on earth, thanks to the monarchy. To break its hold on France, the English underwrote the Masonic meetings and propaganda.

The French monarchy fell finally because of the leadership given the revolutionary movement by the Free Masons. After Louis XV's death, they were led by a cousin of Louis XVI, Louis Philippe d'Orleans, who came to be known as Philippe Egalité, and by such Masons as the famous Marquis de Lafayette, and that distinguished visitor, the American, Benjamin Franklin. All this time much was whispered about them, little known. Finally, in 1849, Masonry itself issued an open statement in which the Masonic order was described as a "philanthropic, philosophic and progressive institution, at whose base is a belief in the existence of God and the immortality of the soul. Its purpose is to do good, to study the universal principles of morality, science, art, and to practice all the

virtues. Its motto has always been: Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity."

This was the motto of the French Republic and, if the Masons did not co-operate with the Roman Catholic Church, it was because to them the Republic was a religion, with freedom to think as you pleased as its basic principle. Of this privilege many availed themselves. In the meantime, over the border the opposition to France was thoroughly organized. Attacking France, this efficient enemy was defeated only at frightful cost, and for this many held the Masons responsible. In establishing a "do as you please" liberalism as the law of France, Masonry wrote its own epitaph and perhaps that of France, its enemies insisted.

They pointed to the difficulties that France faced as proof of the charge that they brought against Masonry. Because it was an organized secret society dealing in propaganda, the critics of Masonry held it responsible for the laws established by the Revolution, and these laws for France's troubles.

They fell into three categories, and were aimed, all of them, at the bases on which society rested under the royal regime. To begin with, the Revolution revised the inheritance laws. Under the monarchy, estates had been kept intact. Inheriting an estate from his father, the eldest son was made responsible for the welfare, not only of his own children, but of his brothers and sisters as well. With an intact estate behind him, he could afford to assume this charge. But the Revolution changed all this. From then on, each child inherited equally.

This split up estates. In addition, inheritances were heavily taxed and this forced sales. With no property to keep them at home, sons went adventuring. So did daughters. Two other laws increased this tendency. One of them was the law establishing centralized government. By centralizing authority in Paris, the Revolution lessened men's ability to protest. By ending local self-government, Napoleon tied their hands.

The power of the local community, the advantage of belonging

to it, had been destroyed, and a second law destroyed the guilds, those unions in which both employers and workers were united in an effort to gain and share a living. For years even unions were forbidden. When finally they were allowed, they tended to co-operate with leaders like Blum and Jaurès, men who preached class conflict, instead of with Catholics such as La Tour du Pin, Frederic Le Play, and Albert de Mun. In co-operation lay France's salvation, these men insisted, pointing out that laws aimed at guilds, self-government and the home had undermined the bases of the regime that made France the most powerful country on earth.

The people who were protected by these factors maintained the King as an expert trained to deal with complex national and international questions, but if the King ruled France, he ruled only indirectly the families, guilds and republics that composed it.

This interwoven fabric of government was strong enough to resist effectively the encroachments of royalty. In control of local governments the workings of which they understood, assured a living by the way management and labor co-operated within the guilds, safe on estates and farms that could not be taxed to pieces, men felt secure. Secure, they reproduced. Children were an asset. As they grew up, they helped out with the chores. Leaving the farm to go into other lines of work, they brought their earnings home to the castle, however humble, that they all shared. But if the people could protect themselves against the King and even his tax collectors, nobles riding to hounds were another matter. Riding rough-shod over the fields, they stirred up resentment, then rebellion. In a reaction that failed to discriminate between the good and the bad, everything was changed. Soon that infallible indication of danger, the birth rate, began to fall, and it continued to do so until, in 1939, it had become the first problem of France.

The birth rate is at the heart of the question of defense, and in any society defense is a first consideration. But where was the fault? In the system, many insisted, pointing to the fact that the French still reproduced in Canada, where Catholic teaching still

prevailed. Quantity, however, is not in itself a solution of this problem. Quality, too, must exist, or be developed in the prospective citizens that mothers and fathers bring to a nation. But if a people are healthy, the raw material of quality is present in the newly born. If it is to become effective, however, it must be shaped by education. Unfortunately, for years attention in France was concentrated more on the question of how children should be educated than on the vital necessity of having a sufficient number of children to guarantee the integrity and continuity of national development. To begin with, you must have children to educate, as Fernand Boverat, an authority on the French birth rate, pointed out.

He showed that the birth rate was restricted by conditions artificially created. About these, however, Chautemps did nothing when he came to power, though the danger inherent in them was obvious from the statistics brought to his attention. In 1830 the average French family still had four children. When Chautemps became Premier the average was less than two and in Paris less than one. From 1876 to 1936 the number of births recorded yearly dropped fifty percent. Especially marked was the decline from 1930 to 1936. In fifty-four out of ninety departments the diminution ranged from seventy-three to forty-eight percent, and, in 1936, in sixty departments there were more deaths than births.

The death rate creates a problem allied to that of the birth rate. In 1860 the young in France had four million elderly people to support, in 1890 five million, in 1935 six million, and it was estimated that if the ratio of old to young continued until 1965 a greatly diminished number of younger men and women would have eight million elderly people weighing down their shoulders.

An increase in the birth rate would have remedied this relation, but where there were 1,022,000 births in 1876, there were only 630,000 in 1936, and 45,000 of these children were born to foreigners. If this ratio continued, there would be only 280,000 births in 1965. While, from 1870 to 1936, the French population

grew by three millions, these newcomers were all foreigners or naturalized citizens.

The French themselves did not increase the population, and the number of marriages contracted declined alarmingly. In 1938 these were only 272,903 marriages from which figure should be deducted 24,318 divorces. Of the 612,138 children born that year, 22,258 were still born, and 40,113 died before they were one year old. Calling attention to the difference between these figures and those that lent strength to the totalitarian states, Tardieu laid the problem squarely before the public and his political opponents, of whom Chautemps in many ways was the most significant. Chautemps, however, did nothing.

His principal concern was maintaining his party's supremacy.

He came of a large family himself. Of his three brothers, two were killed leading troops into action in 1914. A third, Pierre, who was a lawyer in Tours, was badly wounded, and Camille Chautemps himself contracted an illness in the trenches as a result of which he nearly died. Coming to life again, he showed the effect of his early training. Well born and well brought up, he had unusual self-control.

He seemed always to be at his ease. Even in a country where good manners are a tradition, he showed a quiet attentiveness when others spoke that won him many friends. Unlike Tardieu who was shy and covered his stagefright by being as rough with others as he was with himself, Chautemps was a finished actor, natural and convincing. Unemotional where Herriot was emotional, precise though less forthright than Daladier, he was for a number of years "the man who arranged difficult differences," what Americans call "a fixer."

This ability of Chautemps to fix things was invaluable to the Masons and to the Radical Socialist party in which the Masons were influential. To them Chautemps' tact was an asset. According to popular account, it was usually Chautemps who managed to keep Herriot and Daladier pulling together. As a former pupil of Her-



riot's, Daladier at times grew restive. But Chautemps "supported well," to adapt a French explanation, not only professorial but other advice. While his blue eyes were a feature of his sensitive face, others forgot them, fascinated by the moderation with which he replied to attacks that often exceeded the decencies.

This excess he avoided. In discussing his enemies, he "tempered his language to the shorn lamb," his slight, deprecating smile suggesting that he was amused by their antics, that he knew he was more likely to win than they were. As it happened, he did. Representing the most powerful party in France, this was to be expected, but his success was not due entirely to his party. Many knew they could count on him, so he had a large personal following, and he saw to it that this following reinforced the conservative group in the Radical Socialist party.

This party was divided into groups. A lawyer by profession, Chautemps was in favor of preserving local and provincial powers. Like Herriot, he was against that concentration of power in Paris that put the control of France so completely in Napoleon's hands, and, later on, in the hands of the rich and their political man-Fridays. But Chautemps and Herriot had to face divisions within the party. Led by George Bonnet, and in the Senate by Joseph Caillaux, the conservatives resisted any threat to what they called "sound finance." Others followed Daladier in demanding a strong central government able to underwrite national defense and put down strikes, especially strikes in the civil service. More inclined toward Socialism were the Young Turks of the party. One of them was Pierre Cot, Blum's minister of aviation.

It was Pierre Cot who undertook to nationalize the manufacture of airplanes and was blamed bitterly for the shortage in striking power that hampered France in 1938. Full approval, as a result, was never accorded him by the groups in the Radical Socialist party.

These groups warred on one another, a circumstance that made Chautemps valuable as a peacemaker, nor was it only in his own

party that his qualities were appreciated. If France were to be governed as a democracy, parties had to be organized and kept working, and at this business Chautemps was successful. Furthermore, his party had a steady influence. More than anyone else, it was Chautemps who restrained the Communists, so others let him alone as a sign of appreciation. Even when he separated from the mother of his three children and married again, little use was made of an incident that might have tempted an Englishman like Gladstone. Leaving private affairs out of public controversies, however, was in the French tradition, but self-effacement was not. In this respect, Chautemps differed from the average politician. Unobtrusive to a degree, he moved so quietly that he was described as "a ghost with the tread of a cat, edging his way through a forest of windmills."

This last was a reference to the way the French use their hands when they talk. They have to! In the French language there are no longs and shorts as there are in English. Every syllable is equal in length and accent, so gestures are needed for emphasis. But Chautemps' were never exaggerated, so relatively few people had heard of him when he came to Paris after the war, moving to the capital from Tours, a town typical of France politically. As André Siegfried has explained, in such towns the "lines are as sharply drawn as geographical boundaries. On one side stand the 'little' people, on the other the 'socially prominent.' When an individual 'makes money,' too much money, he moves over to the Right.

"Those who are climbing," Siegfried continues, "but have not quite 'made' society proper, linger, as a matter of jealous spite, on the Left. So in every French town and village two parties spontaneously form, a party that wants to give more and more power to the people, and a party that wants to take the incompetent masses under its wing and manage its affairs wisely."

These differences Chautemps had to face as a politician. Mayor of Tours when he was first elected a deputy in 1919, by 1924 he was Minister of Justice. Along with parliamentary government the

powers of this ministry were curtailed out of all recognition when martial law was declared in 1939, but in 1924 and for fifteen years thereafter to be made Minister of Justice meant that the politician so honored had become one of the great personages of the French Republic.

The judges, the prosecuting attorneys, and the examining magistrates who did the work done by a grand jury in America, were all civil servants attached to the Ministry of Justice. Naturally, they were interested in what a Minister thought of their ability, their record, and their chance of advancement. But it was later on, as Minister of the Interior, that Chautemps felt the pulse of the country. While Justice and Finance, clenching the fist of the law and collecting taxes, were important, it was the Minister of the Interior who managed the country through the police and the prefects. While these subordinates did not know everything—they told Poincaré that he would win the election in 1924—they came as close to knowing, and as close to controlling, individualists like the French as was humanly possible. But they did not always co-operate with the Minister, as Chautemps was to learn. Side-stepping insubordination when it raised its head, Chautemps left this problem to Daladier.

It almost wrecked the career of France's civilian Napoleon.

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# VI

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## Death in Daladier's Heart

It is difficult to explain the career of Edouard Daladier without recalling the effect on France of the foreign policy and the domestic policy of Napoleon and Napoleon's nephew. Born in the troubled days that preceded the French Revolution, Napoleon grew up in an atmosphere where the Church and its system of education were under fire. Because the Church hampered the free expression of opinion, Voltaire fought this control of thought, and where Voltaire left off Rousseau began, emotionalizing the people, preaching "Liberty, Equality and Fraternity," converting the French to the new religion of which these words were the motto. Commenting on Rousseau's influence with sprightly disapproval, Voltaire pointed to what Voltaire himself had done. More practical than emotional, he had fathered the belief that Protestant Prussia should be strengthened at the expense of Catholic Austria. To Napoleon this was convincing.

The future Emperor in his younger days wanted to be a writer and like all young writers in France he was captivated by Voltaire.

The great Voltaire knew best, Napoleon concluded, so Napoleon reversed the policy of the Kings in respect to Germany. Thanks to Napoleon's permission, Prussia began its long march to power, gathering under its wing the German Catholics who would normally have turned to Austria. Years later Napoleon III boasted that, with the idea of uniting nationalities regardless of strategical considerations, his uncle "wiped out two hundred and fifty-three

independent states in Germany," a circumstance that led Proudhon to prophesy that "the principle of nationalities, supposedly humane, will cause torrents of blood to flow in Poland and the Balkans." Foreseeing where this would lead, with the Kaiser ruling Germany, the distinguished historian, Jacques Bainville, reproached Napoleon for having brought to an end "the wise and prudent policy constantly followed by the French monarchy, which consisted in putting the German colossus to sleep, in dividing it, enfeebling it, profiting from its religious quarrels, its territorial divisions, the rivalry among its princes, its lack of money, its backward civilization. The wars of the Revolution and the Empire were glorious. It would be absurd to deny the lustre they cast on the French nation. But the practical result of them was to unite what should have been kept apart, to awake what it would have been better to have left asleep."

This awaking of the German nation was to come to a head even in Napoleon's time, bringing Bluecher to the aid of Wellington at Waterloo. For this the French Emperor had no one but himself to blame. Obviously, after his great victory at Jena, he could have kept Germany split up. Quite as obviously, the Allies could have done so in 1919. If they had wished to do so the peacemakers could have strengthened Catholic Poland by keeping Austria and Hungary together. They could have made a separate kingdom or republic of Catholic Bavaria and Württemberg. The South Germans asked nothing better. But the Allies did not do this, partly because Clemenceau, like Napoleon, believed in strengthening Protestant Prussia at the expense of Austria, even though a Catholic check on Prussia would "have meant peace for one hundred and fifty years," to quote the French Royalist, Charles Maurras. But Clemenceau was anything but a Royalist.

He was a product of the Napoleons' domestic policy, a policy that had far more effect on the Emperor's foreign policy than is generally realized. As a soldier, the great Napoleon should have known that a united Germany is a far more formidable factor in



*Wide World Photos, Inc.*

The French Premier, Edouard Daladier, arriving at the palace in Versailles for the presidential election in April, 1939.



international politics than any amount of armament, be that armament French or German. But the Emperor was fighting for the new freedom, ostensibly at least, and the Protestants were more likely to further this cause than the Catholics, or so Napoleon thought. But was that all he had in mind? I once asked Clemenceau.

"He was sincere in his convictions," France's wartime Premier answered, "but there is good and bad in everyone."

This surprised me, coming from George Clemenceau, but there is something to be said for his point of view. Reading on an old coin the inscription, "*République Française, Napoléon Empereur*," even stanch democrats begin to wonder if a religious enthusiasm for "liberty, equality, and fraternity" was all that animated the Corsican. After all, this new religion served his purpose. Appealing to the pride of the French in his amazing victories, he called on them to "come on and fight for what you believe in," and so used their emotions to further his own interests. Spectacular to a degree, he blinded the French to their own welfare. But however much he overlooked what mattered most to the French, in the whole course of his march to power, his spread over Europe, his decline and fall, this military genius never forgot what mattered most to him.

He never forgot Napoleon.

He has left illuminating proof of this, in his own handwriting. Finding himself a hero in a world where, since the Revolution, men were officially equal, he ground this principle of equality into the law by establishing a series of statutes known as the Code Napoleon. "So much the better," many agreed. But this is not all the story. From then on, true enough, everyone was equal before the law, but theory and practice frequently differ. As a gangster from a land like Corsica, Napoleon had learned the law of the jungle. He had learned the advantage of keeping one law for himself and setting up another for others. Codifying it, he made everyone in France equally helpless in the hands of the state—everyone, that



is, except Napoleon and those to whom he granted his favors.

He could grant them, and they were munificent, because all authority was concentrated in him. In order to maintain this authority, he dissolved all those local guaranties and protections that had existed under the monarchy. As Taine, and more recently Maurras, Bainville and Pierre Gaxotte in his now famous *The French Revolution*, have made clear, a parish council in France had more authority under the monarchy than any mayor has now. Now the mayors are controlled from Paris by that centralized government that Napoleon set up. Nor was this all he did. By the inheritance laws, as I have already said, he broke down the power of families. By enforcing the law against the guilds he ended the co-operation of management with labor, and out of this destruction that Napoleon made official, and the labor wars born of it, grew that continuously unfavorable balance of trade with which France was to struggle year after year. Why Napoleon did this invited many questions, but those who wish to know why have only to consult the letter the Emperor wrote on June fifth, 1806, to his brother Joseph, at the moment King of Naples.

"My idea is to have in Paris one hundred families," Napoleon wrote him, "raising them to power along with the throne and giving power only to them, because they are only trustees." Everyone who is not a trustee to whom Napoleon has delegated power "will tend to be leveled off," he continues, "by the effect of the Civil Code," which was the name he gave the Code Napoleon then. "Establish the Civil Code in Naples," he goes on. "Everything that is not attached to you will then destroy itself, in a few years, and that which you wish to preserve will consolidate its power. There's the great advantage of the Civil Code. You must establish the Civil Code there," he repeats. "It will consolidate your power because it will level off everything that does not derive from you and there will be no more great families except those to whom you delegate power. This is what led me to advocate a Civil Code and led me to establish it."

This at least is frank. Obviously, in Napoleon's view, equality is only for the mass of the people. For the favored, there should be a favoring inequality.

The effect this was to have on republican France was obscured for seventy years, first by the restoration of the monarchy and later by the adventuring of the lesser Napoleon. Beginning with Louis XVIII, who succeeded Napoleon I, the monarchs freed France from invasion. But there were now parliamentary checks on the Kings, and when Charles X, brother and successor of Louis XVIII, tried to restrict the right to vote, he was dethroned in favor of Louis Philippe of the younger branch of the Bourbon family. In obtaining a guarantee of Belgian independence even from Prussia, in restraining the warlike tendencies of his minister, the future dictator, Thiers, in supporting Austria against Prussia, the King made "safety first" his guiding principle. But he, too, was ousted when he opposed enlarging the right to vote.

The Second Republic was established then, with the great Bonaparte's nephew as President. Soon Louis Napoleon had his right to remain as Emperor confirmed by an overwhelming vote. A product of democracy, he had to renew his popularity by a succession of spectacular, often dangerous appeals to popular opinion. Money, better times, people wanted at once. As to economic problems, the Emperor could not take the long view for fear he would be deposed. Feeling against foreigners he had to capitalize as well. From his uncle he had inherited the idea that Catholic Austria was a danger. With this in mind, in the course of his twenty-two year rule, he helped create not only a German Empire dominated by Protestant Prussia, but a united Italy, and an Italy united at the expense of the Vatican.

This made Germany and Italy powerful. As a collection of small states quarreling among themselves they had not been overly dangerous. As an empire and a kingdom they presented a far more serious problem. Eventually they became allies and a grave danger to France, a possibility that Napoleon III failed to foresee.

But perhaps even more important than what he did abroad was what he did within France. By extending the suffrage and restoring parliamentary rule, he created "a nation where only money is at a premium, where nobility can only die out," Ernest Renan wrote. Why this pessimism? Why so distinguished a thinker as the author of *The Life of Jesus* felt this way requires explanation. "In conserving only one inequality, that of money," Renan went on, "in leaving on its feet only one giant, the state, and around it thousands of dwarfs; in creating a powerful center, Paris, amid an intellectual desert, the country; in turning all social services over to a bureaucracy," Napoleon III did not foresee who his successors would be.

It was Renan who lived to watch the part that bankers came to play in the business of winning elections.

The vote had come to stay. But it required money to stage an election campaign. For funds the politicians went to the bankers. To keep control of the centralized government that made dwarfs of all but a favored few, it was necessary to win elections, so the money makers underwrote their favorite vote getters. With the fall of Napoleon III, the government of France fell into the hands of these two kinds of men, those who knew how to make money and those who knew how to get votes.

The system favored them. But there was a flaw in it.

It favored too obviously the smart trader and the smooth talker as against the plodder and those who were sincere enough to follow a difficult path toward a worth-while end. It favored the city man as against the farmer. Worst of all, it made far too much possible for the rich and at the same time protected the poor insufficiently, a dangerous state of affairs where the people have the vote. Gradually the average man began to realize that unless he had money to buy favors or to hire expensive lawyers, he was apt "to get it in the neck," as an American newspaperman put it, accurately if inelegantly.

This soured the average man, and demagogues were quick to

voice this discontent. Raising funds among the people and elsewhere, Jaurès began preaching rebellion. Hampered by the vetoes of the established oligarchy, newcomers in the banking world, some of them from abroad, underwrote an attack on the old crowd, particularly that portion of it in control of the Bank of France. So, presently, thanks to these activities, the idea gained ground in France that a country was one vast corporation in business to make money for everyone in it. Keeping company with this idea was another, the notion that politicians should take over finance as trustees for the people.

This merged with the foreign conception, the Socialists' conclusion that the interests of all peoples were the same. Gradually this Internationalism began getting the upper hand in France. But the Nationalists fought it. Backed by the conservative bankers, neatly described as "the old-timers," first Poincaré, then Doumergue and Tardieu, finally Laval, tried to stem the tide. Where the others succeeded, at least in part, Laval raised a wind of resentment that literally blew Blum into power, and with Blum Daladier returned as Minister of National Defense.

This idea of uniting all the military services in a single ministry had been Tardieu's, but Daladier made it so thoroughly his own that he raised a question as to whether or not he was another Bonaparte, a civilian Napoleon. Very definitely a product of the Napoleonic system, he was a vote getter and at the same time a man of few words. To those who knew him at all it was obvious that he shared Clemenceau's feeling that politicians talk too much.

"The Council of Ministers?" Clemenceau exclaimed in 1914 during the war, when he was asked what was going on behind the scenes. "An endless palaver," he said, "but never any decision! Poincaré, Briand, Bourgeois, Doumergue talk constantly—and about everything. They solve nothing."

This weakness in the French political system Daladier had always attempted to minimize. If he saw its faults, if he saw the weakness in Napoleon's foreign policy, he was aware, too, of the

possibilities inherent in the domestic system that the first Napoleon imposed on France. Nationalist to the core, brought up as a Jacobin, like those legendary Revolutionists Daladier believed in a strong central government. If it takes a Napoleon to make it work, so much the worse, or so much the better! But work it must, for the sake of France. That faith, ardent, unshakable, that his grandfather had in the Roman Catholic dispensation, the grandson transferred to the homeland and its government.

The faith of Edouard Daladier in the French Republic grew from his belief that it gave every man a chance. Born in Capentras in southeastern France on June eighteenth, 1884, the son of a baker, from his mother he inherited his ability to say things clearly. But if he spoke to the point, he was tactful in public. In private, however, he was blunt, his endless suspicion of others determining his attitude. Eying that drooping cigarette of his, he often risked losing it when he spat out some comment that put his visitor on the defensive. Rich tales were whispered of how he slouched in his chair, then surprised the unwary with some unexpected thrust. Hunched forward, he searched out the truth.

"Why do you want me to do that?" he would ask.

His voice seemed to struggle for expression, as if strangled by emotions at war within him. But having asked why, he answered his own question, and often the why's of politics are none too complimentary to those who are seeking favors. Like comedians, politicians differ. Some are funnier than others, but they were never so to Daladier. To him everything was important, everything serious, because he was concerned with only one problem, saving France, and that was no laughing matter. Contemptuous of those who had any lesser purpose, he could afford to be so.

He had made no money in politics or elsewhere, so he could face his opponents squarely.

"I have neither capital nor capitalists to defend," he once reminded Blum in the Chamber.

This referred to the fact that the Socialist chieftain had pros-

pered as a corporation lawyer. But politicians are not judged by such details. If Daladier co-operated with Blum later on, however, he did so "with death in his heart," to quote one of his close advisers, and in order to save what he could of the French defensive system. As he knew, defense begins with the birthrate.

This problem Daladier meant to solve, not dodge, as Chautemps did. Instead, he studied it carefully. Even as a boy he had shown this aptitude for study. After specializing in political records in his youth, when he graduated he went into the civil service as a modestly paid teacher of history.

The war ended that. Often in the trenches during the battles of 1914-1918, he learned there that the military were just as important as the civil servants of France. If he became prejudiced in favor of soldiers, however, it was because early in his career he came into conflict with a famous civil servant, the Prefect of Police in Paris, the Corsican, Jean Chiappe, the colorful personage whom Chautemps sidestepped, leaving to Daladier the ticklish business of handling him. But what Daladier did about Chiappe, and another "trouble-maker" named Fabry, is part of the story of Albert Lebrun's first seven years in the Elysée.

They were charged with dynamite. Happily, however, for those seeking accurate information they were watched with an understanding eye by one of the abler men among France's public servants.

A former Inspector General of Finance, a master-at-arms and a fencer, good-looking and well dressed, François Pietri was often seen at the races, but he was more than a social figure. An historian, he was one of the few men in French politics who could discuss Napoleon without choking, for, in respect to the great Bonaparte, French politicians were of two sorts. Either they admired the Emperor, sometimes to the point of turning somersaults mentally, or they hated him. Pietri measured him coolly.

This and other signs of good judgment, and his tact, made him an obvious candidate for the Elysée.

*"Il est possible,"* the well-informed said. What they mentioned less openly was the fact that Daladier also was among the "possibles." To Daladier's enemies it seemed that one way of getting rid of this civilian Napoleon was to bury him in the Elysée. With this in mind, they waged war on him, a fight carefully planned and as carefully concealed.

This fight Daladier won. By playing one candidate off against another, he made sure of his own job. Waving the Elysée aside, he helped re-elect Lebrun.

## VII

### Possibles and Pietri

WHEN he was elected President of the French Republic after the assassination of Paul Doumer, the first important task that Albert Lebrun was called on to perform was to choose a new Premier. For this post, thanks to the elections held in May, 1932, Herriot was the obvious choice. When he fell in December, despite the aid given him by Pietri, who also wanted to pay the debt owed to America, the most experienced politician left on his feet in the Radical Socialist party was Chautemps. But Daladier was the man the public knew. Simple, direct, well liked, and free of scandal, he seemed destined to go a long way. His chance came early in 1933. On the day Hitler became German Chancellor, Edouard Daladier formed a government in France.

He remained in power nine months, a long period to politicians who wanted to be ministers themselves.

The Daladier government lasted because it was supported by the Socialists, and for two distinct reasons. One of them was the fact that they regarded it as "a lesser evil," their idea of a major one being anything resembling Tardieu. The other reason was that there had been a rift in their ranks. Because of this, they were inviting no extra trouble for the moment. Led by Marquet and Déat, a group broke away and forced the neo-Socialist party with seats in the Chamber between the Socialists and the Radical Socialists. Beyond the Radical Socialists was the Center party led by Flandin, Pietri and Reynaud. Along with Daladier, such conservatives looked on with amusement while these new Socialists told Blum what they



thought of him for preaching class warfare. What France needed, these dissident Socialists said, was a strong government that would enforce order and put the nation's interest first. Classes should come afterward, they announced, only to have Blum describe them as Fascists.

It was Daladier who took Blum's mind off the question of who was and who was not a Fascist. Faced by a falling revenue and bad times, Daladier had proposed expense and salary cuts, and on this issue the Socialists attacked him, voting out first Daladier's government, then Sarraut's. When Chautemps came in, it was obvious that the public was weary of this unrest. But worse was to come. With details of the Stavisky scandal filling all the papers, with thousands rioting, Chautemps gave up, telling Daladier that the diminutive but courageous Prefect of Police, the Corsican, Jean Chiappe, was doing less than he should to preserve order in the streets. Before taking up this question, however, Daladier tried to form a government of national union, made up of all the party leaders.

The conservatives refused this offer.

They thought that they would soon be able to put a ministry of their own in power so, in January, 1934, Daladier was forced to form a government made up of his friends because he could not make friends with his enemies. Once in power, the new Premier decided to deal with two trouble-makers immediately. One of them was Chiappe. To get rid of him, Daladier proposed to make him Governor General of Morocco, a kick upstairs to which the little Corsican took exception. So Chiappe presently "found himself," as he put it, "on the street."

The other trouble-maker was Fabry, the director of the Comédie Française, the government theater. Fabry had put on there Shakespeare's *Coriolanus*, an acrid criticism of democracy, full of incitement and rioting—in short, a bad example! But antidotes have to be chosen carefully and in Fabry's place Daladier put a policeman—a policeman who had written verses, but "a flatfoot," nevertheless, disgusted Parisians complained.

This slighting reference was aimed less at the police than at Daladier, for, by now, no one was being kind to the Premier.

He was in deep. One of the remarks made about him was that "as all men do at times, he had made an ass of himself, playing politics, trying to please both the Left and the Right when it came to Chiappe." For the Left wanted Chiappe thrown out. Instead he had thumbed his nose, and resigned, while the Right thundered, "Keep him!" Armed now and stripped for action, these so-called Fascists made their meaning clear. As to those who belonged to neither extreme, they, too, were growing restive. On the whole, however, they were inclined to agree that if Chiappe had slipped up in his duty, he should have been dismissed, not promoted. As for appointing "a cop," a "flic"—if I may be permitted to use a term freely employed at the time—to direct France's distinguished theater, here the French were of one mind.

This was low comedy, misplaced there. For this Daladier was ridiculed as no politician had been in years. Unhappily, the situation soon ceased to be funny.

The rioting was growing constantly, as 1934 began. Forced by conditions to do so, like other theaters the Comédie Française closed its doors early in February, but by now there was no further need of showing the Bard of Avon's play. By now people were acting Shakespeare's *Coriolanus* in the streets of Paris, so the army was brought into the suburbs and in Paris itself the police with its cavalry, the Mobile Guards with their rifles, were mobilized completely. Finally, on February sixth, they staved off an attack on the Chamber of Deputies, a victory that cost many dead and wounded, as I have already mentioned. What I have not yet mentioned is Blum's visit to Edouard Daladier.

"Go on resisting," Blum told Daladier, an account of what he said that Blum's biographers confirm.

"What! Shoot more Frenchmen? No," Daladier answered, and resigned.

This saved him. More than anything else, it accounts for his

come-back. But his return to power followed a strange and tortuous route. Few men have ever survived the ridicule Daladier outlived, but as the public heard more and more of his effort to form a government of all the parties, as it learned more of his refusal to maintain at the expense of French lives the government he did form, the average Frenchman's attitude mellowed. As anyone knows who walked through the Place de la Concorde, the Rue Royale and along the Rue du Faubourg Saint Honoré toward the Elysée the morning of February seventh, it would have taken an army and a massacre to halt that mob of infuriated and determined men and women. Parliamentary government had been impeached by the people. As a commissaire of police, his uniform torn, his face covered with cuts and blood, his eye blacked, told me as he pulled me into a safer place, "It isn't armed Communists or Fascists or Royalists we fear, but when the people themselves come into the streets *en masse*, God!"

He was right.

The whole eruption of sentiment was at once impressive and frightening, but it calmed down when Doumergue came. Out of the picture now, Daladier nursed his resentment. As he told a close friend, he had "learned more than books could teach" him, and those he held responsible for disaster were the conservative bankers and politicians who had refused to co-operate with him.

These men he set out to sink. Unquestionably, he felt that revenge would be very sweet. Obviously, his chance for revenge lay in co-operation, in helping to lead that combination of parties known as the Popular Front.

This political combination included Daladier's own party. Within the framework of the Popular Front and the agreements that held it together, the Radicals were united with the Socialists and the Communists. But when the Popular Front won the 1936 election, an amazing thing happened to Edouard Daladier. Along with the Communists, Thorez and Peri, along with Blum and Paul Faure, Daladier had stood up before crowds, smiling when the

Internationale was sung, and raising his fist in the Internationalist salute. But with victory came reflection. As the leader of the second largest party in the Popular Front, the Radical Socialist party, Daladier had second choice when it came to ministries.

He asked for and was given the Ministry of National Defense when Blum formed a government in June, 1936. Once installed there, Daladier forgot about revenge, forgot about paying back in their own coin the bankers and industrialists who had refused to co-operate with him at the time of the Stavisky riots in January and February, 1934. Not revenge, but protecting the country had claimed his full attention now. Pushing into the back of his mind his distrust of the conservative politicians who had been allies of Big Business, he set out to get all he could for the army. Calling the generals in, Gamelin, Georges, Colson and Vuillemin, consulting with Marshal Pétain, he kept asking, "What do you need for the army? What do you want?" And when they told him, he invariably made the same answer.

"I'll get it for you," he would reply, in that half-choked voice of his that showed itself when emotion gripped him, and get it he did. But he did not go far to get it. He stuck close to his ministry, receiving people there.

He hardly ever left that long, time-darkened building that stretched a block along the boulevard Saint Germain, but opened on the Rue Saint Dominique. Fighting Blum, saving all that he could, Daladier succeeded in opening the purse strings of France when Chautemps became Premier, but even when Blum became Premier again, Daladier stayed on at the War Department. Even when he became Premier himself in April, 1938, he remained Minister of National Defense, official notices describing him as "Edouard Daladier, Ministre de la Défense Nationale, Président du Conseil."

The title of the Premier is President of the Council of Ministers. But by now it was obvious that Daladier was something more than an ordinary Premier. If he was a politician, he was the army's politician. Having done all he could for the army, he had the army

with him, a circumstance that alarmed many politicians. But not the conservatives! In and out of Parliament, they rallied behind Daladier. From the Royalist leader, Maurras, who had cursed Daladier as a "killer" after the riots, from Maurras and the political leader, Louis Marin, who felt, as I have said, that God was not in his Heaven unless all was Right with the world—from these lords of opinion to the conservative bankers, and, above all, the engineers and manufacturers who had made French production what it had been in the past, the trend had set in, and for a sound reason. When all these representative men helped make Daladier a dictator after the agreement reached with Hitler at Munich, they knew what they were doing, and why.

They wanted to save France. Only the army could do this. Daladier had the army behind him. Out of this fact grew the union that made Daladier France's champion.

The circumstance was to have repercussions not only of national, but of international importance. In Daladier the army had found a talker, a man who fought with words just as soldiers fight with guns. But it was words *backed* by guns that Daladier used on foreigners. For years, face to face with the Germans whom Hitler was rapidly rearming, the French had been forced to turn to the English for counsel and support. Reversing all that, Daladier reminded the English that they were lost without the French army. Because of its officers, its experts, commissioned and non-commissioned, that army was important, and it was now being armed.

It could save England now, but the English must arm, too. France would not fight the coming war alone.

The English had rebuilt Germany after 1918, only to learn that the Germans were still the Germans, still determined to find room for an expanding population. But the English had taken a long time to realize this. As late as January, 1936, Laval, struggling to keep Mussolini friendly to France, had seen his efforts brought to nothing by the English Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden. Nor had Laval, thanks partly to English interference, been any more suc-

cessful in arranging a friendly co-operation between France and Germany.

The English were against this. Fearing it, they had been glad to see Laval go. After Laval fell, Albert Sarraut had filled in as Premier from January to June, till Blum came. Taking power in June, 1936, Blum had co-operated with the English, for the most part doing as they said. Succeeding Blum as Premier in April, 1938, Daladier changed all this. Endlessly suspicious, he insisted that the French army was not to be sacrificed while the English slowly got ready. What he said in effect was that the English should have universal conscription, just as the French had.

This attitude of Daladier's inspired much of the unfavorable propaganda launched against the French Premier by English correspondents and those who were under their influence. A weak man, this? Daladier? To many, as he developed his policy, this charge began to seem more and more unfounded. If Daladier had been weak for a while at the time of the Stavisky riots, he had been man enough to resign rather than shoot more Frenchmen. In the meantime, his new policy had had not only international, but national repercussions.

It had revived the whole question of Bonapartism in France. Since the war, of course, the French had had five dictators. Clemenceau, Poincaré, Doumergue, Laval, and Daladier all had had the right to rule by edict, by decree.

They all had what the French call "*pleins pouvoirs*." But only Daladier had the army behind him. Only Daladier understood Clemenceau's two mistakes. In leaving a united Germany in being, Clemenceau had created a problem that only the army could solve. For fear some popular general like Mangin would use it to seize power in France, Clemenceau had pushed the army aside, but he had in no way lessened the need of it. Only the army could solve the German problem. Furthermore, as Daladier understood, the military in France was all that remained singly and entirely devoted to the service of France.

The bankers and all the great interests allied with them were in business to make a profit, the politicians to win elections. With them making money and getting votes came first. With the army, France came first. But coming in with the army behind him, Daladier suggested too definitely Napoleon.

The way he broke the general strike called to protest against the agreement reached at Munich, the way he pushed the Communists into the background and got for the army everything it needed until he was able to boast of France's "reviving aviation," "*notre aviation renaissante*," only accentuated the fact that here was a civilian Caesar, a man who meant to get results even if he had to behave as Napoleon did.

This question of a dictator, of a civilian Napoleon raised to power for however short or long a time, François Pietri was especially equipped to examine. In Parliament, instead of imposing himself on others, he had let himself grow on others. For years he had been winning their liking as well as their esteem. While no one denied his intelligence, many liked to point out that he never paraded it.

He was never too insistent, a circumstance that led one of his admirers to compare him to King Edward VII. Like the English King, when others sought to convince, Pietri would listen courteously, then slip in a surprising "but" and play up the other side of the story. Some Corsicans—a Corsican told me—have always had this quality, and, like Chiappe, Pietri was a Corsican. Scion of an old patrician and Catholic family, he had been in the civil service before going into politics, and in the civil service he had risen to the highest possible rank. In 1939 only Pietri and Joseph Caillaux, among parliamentarians, were former Inspectors General of Finance. Pietri had served under Caillaux.

He had also served under Marshal Lyautey, so I asked him to compare those two exceptional men.

"They were both fearless," he answered briefly, and Pietri himself made the same impression. More tactful than either the

Marshal or Caillaux, he was promoted from the ranks on the field of battle. Badly wounded, he was finally sent to direct finances in Morocco. Elected a deputy in 1924, he remained in Parliament, serving as Minister of the Budget, then of the Colonies. Later on he was Minister of the Navy under Doumergue. Before Laval was asked to do so, Pietri tried to form a government in June, 1935, after Flandin's fall, but failed.

He saw Bonapartism growing. "But in Corsica," he explained to me, "we are not all Bonapartists." Pointing to his book on Lucien Bonaparte, the great Napoleon's "difficult brother," Pietri spoke approvingly of Lucien's refusal to bend his knee to the Emperor when he thought that his imperial brother was wrong.

The circumstance was significant. In 1939 François Pietri was among the few able men still defending the Republic with intelligence and distinction, and it was not lip service that he paid this ideal. As he reminded the French, history teaches that dictators come to power by attacking parliaments. When this attack succeeds, mob rule begins. By radio speeches addressed directly to the crowd, by spectacular activities intended to dazzle the people, the dictator sways millions. But is it wise to let him do so? With no parliament slowing down too hasty action, there is no time for reflection, no check on a Napoleon's decisions. What has been lacking since the war, Pietri concluded in a notable public address, is that brake on personal power which liberalized monarchies and republics, after suffering from Bonapartism, tried to provide.

"And the future?" I asked him. "Is another Bonaparte likely to come to power in France?"

"I hope not."

An admirer of the Corsican patriot, Pascal Paoli, Pietri remarked to me that "Napoleon made soldiers of us, of all of us, but Paoli made us free men."

The sentiment accounted for Pietri's popularity, for the fact that he was in the running when a new President was chosen in April, 1939. Previous to the election, the Socialists and others



had tried to get rid of Daladier by pushing him into the Elysée, "where he can't talk or act without permission," as a Communist described the intention of this engaging political trick.

This fight to dispose of him Daladier won. But Pietri lost nothing in prestige when a compromise was reached that eliminated him as well as other "possibles" and assured Lebrun's re-election. As Pietri knew, there are compensations in politics.

The President's hands were tied, though, if he wished, he could have risked freeing them. In the meantime, Pietri's hands were free. So were Daladier's. But the President undoubtedly had their sympathy, for parliamentarians liked Lebrun. Even outside Parliament the only repeated reproach addressed to Lebrun year after year was that he cried under strain. But so did Clemenceau.

The first President to be re-elected since Grévy, Lebrun was born at Mercy-le-Haut in the Meurthe-et-Moselle department, in other words in Lorraine, on August twenty-ninth, 1871. Like Poincaré, like everyone from the border, he kept his eye on the Germans. As a soldier, he understood the German problem. Educated at the Ecole Polytechnique, the military school for engineers, and at the School of Mines, like Tardieu, Lebrun was always number one man in his class. Giving up engineering and soldiering for politics, he was first elected a Deputy, then a Senator. Frequently a minister, he was President of the Senate when he was called on in 1932 to take the murdered Doumer's place in the Elysée.

He faced many difficulties there, among them the Stavisky affair that almost brought on civil war, the trouble with Italy over Ethiopia, and the threat to France's communications with Africa. If Germany and Italy had established themselves in Spain they might have cut off France from her colonies, rich with men and with supplies.

They failed to, but with Germany, Italy and Spain unfriendly, Lebrun had to look on helplessly when Hitler seized Austria, and later on, Czecho-Slovakia.

The President of the French Republic could do nothing because

he was meant only to sign papers. Pardons aside, and he pardoned many, Lebrun did this signing mechanically. Considering that he had to authorize even minor decisions, this is not extraordinary. In any case, minor decisions, except for the work they involved, did not bother Albert Lebrun.

It was the larger issues that aged him noticeably. Even though problems were more quickly solved after Daladier was given dictatorial powers, this did not lighten the President's burden.

There was still a constantly increasing stream of decrees to sign, and he would have liked to retire and live in peace. But he had valuable qualities, a way of calming down and adjusting contending interests that was needed at the Elysée. In the thick of the fight to save France, Daladier, as Premier, could not help but arouse opposition, and of this fact Daladier himself took full advantage.

He did not want to be President and many did not want him to be.

The Communists hated him because he had tied their hands. So did the Socialists. Blum was constantly raging against him. But the idea of getting rid of Daladier by putting him in the Elysée tempted them, nevertheless. So Daladier began playing one candidate off against another. If you won't have Daladier, Daladier's friends began asking with serpent's cunning, why not Herriot in the French White House.

This subtle move came to nothing because Herriot was tired, ill and unwilling to run, his intimates said. Well, then, why not Pietri? Objections flooded now. While Pietri was a clean-cut swordsman and a conservative, despite all he had said in public (and privately!) about dictators, "civilian Napoleons," and Bonapartism, he "just might co-operate with Daladier."

It was a Socialist who told me this.

He added, "Remember that, after all, Pietri is a Corsican and a Catholic, and the Catholics, the smart crowd and the rich, even some of the Royalists are behind him." Taking advantage of this fear, "refusing the crown himself," and continuing to play one candi-

date off against another until these candidates and their backers were hopelessly divided, Daladier threw his strength behind Lebrun. Apparently, he had had Lebrun in mind all along, for the French could unite behind him. If Lebrun was a staunch Republican himself, his wife was a practicing Catholic. Their family life was reassuring.

They offended no one excessively, so it was agreed that Lebrun should be re-elected and that Daladier should keep the real power in his own hands.

This agreement brought to an end the third period of the Republic's history.

The first period had been occupied with staving off monarchy, blocking from power any such miniature Napoleon as General Boulanger. To assure the rule of democracy, of government "from below," Clemenceau had attacked both the Church and the army, using Dreyfus as an excuse, only to live to regret it. During the second period of the Republic's life, the period that included the war that began in 1914 and what led up to it, Clemenceau learned that the average voter does not look far ahead.

He "wants his cake and he wants it now," to quote the old Tiger, and he will vote for men who will give it to him, regardless of consequences. In 1914 these consequences had been frightful, and Clemenceau had been converted to a belief in rule "from above." Establishing a dictatorship, he had been stamped out by the politicians when peace returned, and the third period of the Republic's history began.

This period was filled by the fight between those who were interested first of all in preserving personal liberty, and those who believed in that rule "from above" which would make the defense of France a first consideration. An advocate of government by the people, of rule "from below," Herriot had forced Millerand out of the Elysée. But Herriot's opponents, backed by the financiers, had set up a succession of dictators—Poincaré, Doumergue, Laval, and finally Daladier. Chief inspirer of these believers in authority, Tardieu had retired. But he had gone on writing. As much as

anyone had, he had made clear the meaning of Blum: a falling off in production, high prices, few sales, raises in pay robbed ultimately of any value by devaluation, and, worst of all, a shortage in airplanes and pilots, a weakening of the army that made possible Hitler's seizure of territory in Eastern Europe. But Tardieu was not the only one to revive authority. While he wrote, his old enemy, Chautemps, acted. Behind the scenes Chautemps prepared the way for Daladier, and with Edouard Daladier there began again the eternal search of the French for freedom, for the truth that makes men free. What the French meant by this, what they meant by truth is debatable, but their idea of freedom can be defined in practical terms.

They meant by freedom just one thing: freedom from invasion. But invasion always took two forms.

It was either an invasion of national liberty, of the country, or of personal liberty, of the individual. With the Revolution, the French expressed their right to personal liberty in terms that have won them the respect of free men wherever free men live. But the Revolution led to disorder.

This Napoleon rectified, just as Caesar had done nearly two thousand years before the Emperor's time. Invading Gaul, that Gaul that was "divided into three parts," the great Roman noted that the Gauls "fought well and talked well." But they were at war with one another, fighting about their individual rights, so the great Julius was able to conquer them. But if he conquered them, his rule was beneficent.

He restored order and established the law.

This law explains France. From Caesar's time, France's law was Roman law, its government a government of families as that of Rome had been. Future invasions, mainly German, did not change this. As the historian, Fustel de Coulanges, has shown, invaders settled down in France and soon conformed to the Roman tradition and to the teachings of the successor of Rome, the Church.

The philosophy of the Church was Greek, independent and distinguished historians remind us. But philosophy is one thing.

Faith is quite another. While it is true that the Church was governed by experts chosen in the manner approved by Plato, while it is also true that many of the higher teachings of the Church derived from Aristotle in so far as they derived from any pagan source, it should be borne in mind that it was twelve hundred years before the great Macedonian's findings were adjusted by Saint Thomas Aquinas to the Church's dogma, to the Church's insistence that certain things must be accepted on faith. Both before and after Saint Thomas, however, the French grew up as Romans. For one thing, they accepted early in their history, and of their own will, the Roman principle of living. For another, it was Rome that swept back the barbarian and left the French free to live as they pleased.

It was the Roman idea of government that consecrated family rule and made an hereditary monarchy possible. But it was the Church that blessed this rule of families by a family. Persuasive as only artists can be, the priests of the Church did more than anyone else to put Hugh Capet on the throne of France. Along with the soldiers, they helped keep the Kings there, and there is much that can be said honestly in favor of these Kings.

They built the France that has been called "a work of art." But if their government was Roman, French art itself was Greek. So gracious that it charmed, so profoundly based and balanced that it survived, it was a symbol of a civilization, of a civilization that reached heights under Louis XIV. During his reign, and Louis XV's, everyone, from a Russian Emperor to Lord Chesterfield, came to Paris to learn, and if this state of affairs lapsed, it was not direct attack that brought it down. France was too strong to be attacked directly, so propagandists bored from within, leaving special interests, political and financial, free to prey on the spoils when disaster overtook the monarchy that represented the French as a whole, not parties, not divisions within the country.

These divisions, these parties profited from the Revolution at the expense of the people. While the Revolution left men free, "it left them free to starve," Jaurès insisted. But it was years before people awoke to the meaning of the Code Napoleon, the civil law

that made everyone equal before the court, everyone, that is, except those favored few who had money. Mostly these partisans were bankers, bankers and their industrial and political allies. But people realized only after a time to what extent these businessmen had profiteered, nor was the opportunity that Napoleon willed these profiteers the only black eye he gave the French people.

The Emperor stood for war. With the Revolution and Napoleon came twenty-three years of war, and four invasions to a country that the Kings had kept free of invasion. With Napoleon III came another invasion, and in 1914 another. By then the French had had enough of this. If a dictator were necessary to protect them from these tragic intrusions, then they would put up with a dictator, for to them what mattered now, even more than personal liberty, was freedom from national invasion. More than anything else in 1939, what concerned the French was the defense of France. With this in mind they began to study their history.

They began to ask themselves who had best defended France in the past.

They remembered what Lafayette had said. After fighting for American independence and then for revision in France, Lafayette had a change of heart. Adding up the account, he recalled that the King's name was unpopular, "but even so," he wrote to Joseph Bonaparte on November twenty-sixth, 1830, "his name was far more than yours, far more than that of the Republic, a guarantee against war." But how did the King avoid war? How did the Kings ward off invasion for one hundred and seventy-seven years? What was the King's secret, inherited from his forbears? By 1939, the French had concluded that it was simple enough, this secret.

The King was a dictator who could act immediately, who could decide quickly and make his decisions effective, largely because he did not have to wait to discuss them with every Tom, Dick and Harry in France.

This being so, why not try a dictator even in times of peace, the French asked themselves after the agreement reached with Hitler at Munich in September, 1938. To this only a minority objected.

Among those who had marked influence, only Blum held out against this idea. Even Herriot saw a light, and at Versailles in July, 1939, with the government's permission and approval, he spoke his mind. While he still praised much that derived from the French Revolution, he also advised the French to stop being narrow-minded fanatics, to quit decrying the Kings.

"They made the State," he cried.

The need of preserving it accounted for Daladier as it did for Clemenceau, but it was public opinion made possible the careers of both these men. Though the politicians fought them, the people approved them. In the people, as in Clemenceau, was that feeling for France, and at the same time the desire for personal liberty. But who expressed these two sentiments best, and so shaped and formed them into a directed public opinion? The financiers and their press? Unquestionably, the cost of living, economic conditions, affect opinion, but the source of all opinion is what men believe in. Even if they cannot be made to realize where their material interest lies, they will respond to some such slogan as "make the world safe for democracy," and in France it was always the artists, the great personalities, who expressed best such fundamental conceptions, and so formed French opinion.

It was a group of such masters of persuasion who persuaded the French to accept the rule of a single chief, a King, and so free France from invasion. But in doing this, the Kings invaded personal liberty. How much they did so, how justified they were, is a question. In any case, they did so sufficiently to enable Rousseau to arouse the pride of the French in their own ability to rule. A single artist, working alone, Rousseau persuaded the French to replace a single chief, the King, with a multitude of chiefs. In 1900, however, Rousseau in turn was challenged by one of the personalities of France, an artist, a writer who pointed the way to Daladier. Having damned Daladier once, this artist lived to praise him as a temporary expedient. But this writer's real importance was elsewhere.

It was he who revived the traditions in France.

## *THE PERSONALITIES*

“Traditions and progress  
are the two great enemies of  
human kind.”—

Paul Valéry.





## Traditions and Maurras

THERE came to Paris from the South, some fifteen years after Sedan, a young man named Charles Maurras. What of it? *This*: Maurras almost brought on civil war in France. But when he arrived in the capital, nothing suggested his future. Only seventeen, small, incurably deaf, poor, he was heavily handicapped. No one had any reason to think that he would restore the traditions, revive French faith in France's ancient heritage, in "the glory that was Greece and the grandeur that was Rome." Soon enough, however, to those with whom he came in contact it was evident that Maurras had an unusual gift for expression.

His feeling for the music and rhythm of language, his sense of imagery and of drama, his way of defining ideas drew praise from the converted radical, Taine, from such conservatives as Paul Bourget and Maurice Barrès, and from the Socialist, Anatole France. Even so, no one guessed Maurras' future. No one foresaw that some would die, thousands riot because of him, and thousands more gather to do him honor when he came out of prison. Furthermore, when they did, they diverted the attention. High lights in a sensational career, these circumstances obscure Maurras' real importance.

The role he played in the counter-revolution was part of a struggle for power temporary in its significance. In his more profoundly conceived expressions of opinion, he deals with truths that are eternal.

It was the way he did this that led Raymond Poincaré to call Charles Maurras "one of the great statesmen of our time." In praising Maurras, the war-time President of the French Republic kept great company. A majority of the abler men in France have saluted Maurras for one reason or another. As that moderate-minded, intellectual aristocrat, Abel Bonnard, explained, "Maurras satisfies our need of grandeur." But Maurras stands, too, for things more specific.

"My gratitude to Maurras is in direct proportion to my hatred of war. He is the true pacifist," said Pierre Benoit.

"He taught me to reflect and to think straight. If there were more men in France of his high value, his irreproachable integrity, French affairs would go much better," wrote Claude Farrère, and on his death bed the historian, Jacques Bainville, whispered, "I owe everything to Maurras, except life itself."

These views, representative of the French Academy, were seconded, far and wide, by younger groups, even Communists. Ramon Fernandez was to write, "They have put in prison the most disinterested man in France," and André Malraux declared that Maurras was "one of the greatest intellectual forces of today." But Maurras was little known outside the Latin world, so foreigners have often asked why this avowed Royalist was elected to the French Academy.

The reason was the illuminating effect he gave his belief that only order permits quality to come to the top, and that only quality conserves. Pointing and reinforcing this theme with every value known to classic learning, Maurras came slowly and against great odds to eminence. Convincing not only others but himself and to such an extent that he felt justified in resorting to violence in his active life, he provoked protest, at times savage and frequently misleading.

His story begins simply. Born on April twentieth, 1868, at Martigues, a town of six thousand inhabitants between Marseilles and Montpellier on the Mediterranean Sea, Maurras was of moun-



*Wide World Photos, Inc.*

The Royalist chieftain and philosopher, Charles Maurras, addressing the French Academy. At his right is Marshal Franchet d'Esperey.



tain people who had come down to the plain. His father was a minor civil servant who liked music and dancing, his mother a pious woman. But however simple Maurras' home surroundings, they were placed in a setting more impressive than any palace. As he grew up, Maurras had around him an environment exceptional in its effect.

The part of France known as Provence is a land where torrents tumble down from the mountains only to spread into lazy streams sloping slowly toward the sea. Up high, woods give way to rocks that are red, like clotted blood. Down below, the terrain is rich with vineyards, olive, orange, lemon and fig trees, orchards of apricots, cherries and pomegranates, flowers and vegetation. All this is powdered with red gold blown from the hillside and white sand blown from the shore. Dusted though they are, fields and marshes remain green in contrast to the silver of lake and pool. In Provence primary values insist on recognition, as Maurras reminds us in such books as *Le Chemin de Paradis* and *L'Etang de Berre*. Birds sing in Provence with "full-throated ease," and odors are intense. Everything tempts the country's vigorous men and its full-bosomed women to live variously and abundantly. Provence, however, is only part of another environment, France. If this desirable homeland, Provence, is to remain the property of those who hold it, then France itself must be defended.

This Maurras learned in school, but he also learned there that salvation comes from co-operation, the co-operation of the weak with the strong, the defense of the weak by more powerful men. No one is so independent that he can disregard aid from others, no one so weak that he cannot be of use. But those fitted to do so must direct the others.

This is the doctrine of the Roman Catholic Church where the individual is taught that he cannot make his own law because he is not alone in the world, and Maurras has never ceased to praise this teaching. But Maurras lost his faith. Confessing this "with as much sadness as simplicity," he sought to re-establish by argument the

Heaven, and his right to it, that the Church promises believers if they live well, and have faith.

The account of how Maurras recovered intellectually the hope of immortality is to many among the most inspiring in modern philosophy. What makes life worth living, he asks. What makes a man what he should be, unafraid to die? The answer is, men live on by virtue of what they do on earth. If they have helped to make what is temporal a part of what is eternal, they do not die. But what is eternal on earth? The facts speak for themselves. While it is true that men die, the civilizations they create live on if they are created along certain recognizable lines.

These all stem from a principle that is fundamental, order, the fact that everything has its place. Unequal values are, but minor values sustain major values, major values reinforce those that are minor. When they are allowed to do so, an enduring civilization results. By associating himself with it, a man perpetuates himself. But what is civilization, especially French civilization? In a civilized society we find, of course, smoothed-off ways of getting along together. Communication has been made easy, the disturbing habit of eating other human beings abandoned. As the dictionary rather vaguely puts it, civilization is "an advanced stage of social development." But is this exactly what civilization is? Without rejecting this or similar definitions, Maurras lends them precision by asking if the character common to all civilizations is not the fact that an individual born in one finds there incomparably more than he can possibly bring to it. In a civilization the individual is relatively nothing.

The good he inherits from the past, and finds in the present, is enormous, for what distinguishes a civilization from a less desirable state is accumulated capital and the fact that this capital can be transmitted, inherited. In the large sense, the complete sense, capital, accumulated wealth of every sort, is the distinguishing mark of civilization. But the fact that capital has been accumulated implies the possibility of preserving it, so these two traits, capital and

its preservation, distinguish civilization as a condition of existence from that condition which is known as savagery. In a state of savagery, the individual inherits almost nothing. Savages are ignorant of how to lend permanence, stability to what they create. What they lack is ability, quality.

The values that a civilization creates and preserves are characterized by just this quality, but only order permits quality to come to the top, in life and art. In a work of art, the artist orders minor values so that they sustain the main value, so that they force on the attention the quality the artist sees in what he is doing. In Greece, the devotion paid to this principle set up statutes and buildings of enduring beauty. In the field of government, Rome worked toward the same end. Thanks to imperial Rome and then to its spiritual heir, the Church, France was protected from barbarian invasions. So Maurras is a Roman. By instinct he prefers order to disorder because order creates what is pleasing, what we mean by quality, and what we mean by quality, what is fundamentally, profoundly pleasing, this endures.

The proof? Look around you!

The Greek principle of art, the Roman principle of government, and the French principle of living have outlasted time. Because they have been admired by qualified men, they have been preserved. For generations, for centuries qualified men have defended them from the attacks of barbarians, and so they have survived. Mortal and so at war with death, all properly constituted men instinctively prefer such principles.

They mean immortality. Having served them, a man can die in peace. In accord with them, he is in accord with the eternal. Because of them, he will live on in the good he has created around his descendants and made a part of them. In applying these principles as far as he is able, he has done his best.

The question is how to apply them, how to preserve the immense values that the French have inherited. In considering this problem, like Frederic Le Play, Maurras studied what "successful



governments" did to create "prosperous societies," for the creation of prosperity is the business of government, and prosperity is determined by men. Men, in turn, are the result of their origins, their environment, and their education. Education simply trains men to deal with environment, but there must be men to train, so Maurras' study of government begins with the birth rate. Men reproduce when they are happy and secure, but a rising birth rate is more than an indication of prosperity.

It is a sign that prosperity will continue if children are properly trained. But trained they must be. Dears they may be to their mothers, but children are savages born. In philosophy this fact has been dwelt on by many, from Heine and Schopenhauer to Le Play and Lombroso, and their findings can be substantiated without resort to second sight. You have only to watch children. Study them, especially under pressure. At a children's party once, by some unhappy miscalculation, the cake was cut into too few pieces.

The last piece was about to be given to a little girl, when the host acted.

He was only four, but he was my son, so I was appalled by what happened. Attempting to loosen his hold on the cake, and, alas, on the curly locks of his little guest, his mother kept repeating in agonized accents, "You love little Françoise. You *want* her to have the cake." Unfortunately, this was not true, nor are such scenes unusual. Instinctively, each child seeks to serve himself first, regardless of others. In any society, this is fatal, as my young son had to learn. Alone, the individual is at the mercy of hostile gangs. United with others, co-operating with them, he survives. But the question goes beyond this.

The problem is to create beneficent, not predatory gangs.

This can be done by reviving the traditions. To begin with, reinforce the family, as the Greeks, the Romans and the French did. Do not go against nature. Nothing unnatural survives, and the family is a natural group. In the family there is an instinctive tendency to preserve what has been gained in the past. Savage this

grip on accumulated property may be, but it can be ameliorated, adjusted to others, by the Church, by guilds where the weak cooperate with the strong, the strong direct the weak, and by local self-government, those republics that existed under the monarchy.

These influences iron the emotions into line, control the childish instinct to serve oneself regardless of others. At the same time they train the mind to work for the general good, the only good that really reinforces the individual.

This good comes from letting abler men direct the activities of others. In nature this is true.

There is an order in nature. Strength there forces weaker elements into their place, and the same is true of art. What makes an artist great is his ability to recognize quality, then order minor values until they reinforce this major value, for only order permits quality to come to the top.

The art that has endured is an outstanding tribute to this fact. So with governments! The governments that endure have been created by people who recognized, whatever their position, that some were born to obey, others to command. Only the competent can rearrange the discordant desires of the individual into that order of merit which men of good taste call beauty because it is fundamentally pleasing. But good taste comes only from a time-honored inheritance, from traditions created by generations of effort, and from living in a civilization which during centuries has set up and preserved institutions that educated men, whatever their origins, to conform to the dictates of nature. Education is useless unless it teaches men to make the most of their environment.

This, individualism does not do. Where the monarchy strengthened the family, individualism weakened it, and hence undermined at the source the conservation of acquired values, the business of preserving civilization, the civilization which is the one emanation of men that continues to live, though men themselves die. Individualism, moreover, has had three forms.

Its religious form was the Reformation, its political form the

Revolution, and its artistic form the Romantic movement. But whatever its form, where there had been order, it created disorder, and with disorder came death. When man individually began to think that what *he* thought and wanted personally was more important than co-operation along traditional lines, he signed an order for his own destruction.

The history of France shows this. Under the Kings, as experts in charge of national and international affairs, but co-operating with families, Church, guilds and local republics, France became the richest and most powerful country on earth. With the Revolution came twenty-three years of war, ending in defeat. With the monarchical restoration, finances were restored in ten years. Under the monarchy, for a hundred and seventy-seven years France was free from invasion. During a hundred and thirteen years of the French democracy, France was six times invaded and in 1938 menaced with a seventh invasion. Under the Republic, in addition, there had been a continuously unfavorable balance of trade. Worse yet, the birth rate had fallen disastrously, a sure sign that something was vitally wrong. When men are prosperous, they reproduce. Remarking that "a regime should be judged, like a tree, by its fruits," Maurras called attention to the fact that families had no security. Inheritance taxes broke up the economic conditions that made large families possible, so men had fewer children. Furthermore, legislation in France actually penalized the married.

A man and a woman who lived together without marrying paid less than half the tax that a married couple of average income paid. If a childless couple with an annual income of about three thousand dollars each divorced, they would save about five hundred dollars a year in taxes. Assuming one hundred as the figure necessary to maintain a reasonable scale of living, what happened to a man with an average income? If he married, it was cut by expenses and taxation to sixty-six. If he had a child, it was cut to fifty. Two children cut it to forty. Three children to thirty-three, and four children

to twenty-eight, nor had the head of the family much of an inheritance to fall back on.

The law forced an equal division of property among children. While this seems fair, it should be remembered that the eldest son, who inherited everything, free of tax, under the monarchy, took care of his brothers and sisters as well as of his own children.

The individualism of the Republic made this impossible. Furthermore, inherited property, divided up equally among children, often had to be sold to meet inheritance taxes.

The long fight of Maurras to restore the traditions that made a rising birth rate, prosperity and freedom from invasion possible under the monarchy, began in 1896 when he returned from reporting the Olympic Games in Greece.

There he was reminded, as he says in the preface to his famous book, *Anthinea*, that "the brief career of what was called democracy in those days makes it evident that the unique quality of that regime was singly this, to consume what periods of aristocracy had produced. Production, accomplishment require order backed by force," and this comes from direction originating from above. With whom? How can men, who are mortal and die, preserve civilizations, all of man that can be made to live on? In short, what kind of government defends a country best, and so its civilization? Of governments there are three kinds. Democracies never last long which is what Edgar Allan Poe meant when he wrote, "Democracy means death." Aristocracies last only in countries favored by geography, as England and America are by water, and Russia by vast wastes of land.

The fact remains that the French wish to rule themselves, though they live in a country easily attacked because of its geographical conformation. In *Romanticism and Revolution*, Maurras shows how demagogues have misled the French as to what they should do. In *Mes Idées Politiques*, and elsewhere, he explains how they can govern themselves successfully. In the family and the guilds, you have aristocratic government, government by chiefs of clan whose

interests are the same as the interests of those they govern, but whose ability is superior, otherwise they would not be at the top. In local self-government, you have people ruling what they know and understand, choosing those they know from close association to be competent as administrators. In such centers what is vital is concentrated.

The representatives such centers send to Paris speak for what matters, for the home, for the way men earn a living, for local conditions they are close to and can govern. But national and international affairs they cannot regulate because they are too far removed from them. To settle these problems a general manager is needed, and for this purpose a King is best.

He can be trained for his task.

His son can be trained to succeed him; then when he dies there is no fight over the succession. Whenever Caesar died in Rome, such fights occurred. They were costly. So why Bonapartism? In a country as easily attacked as France is, no Napoleon solves the problem for long. Napoleons die, but the King lives on. Theoretically, he is eternal. That is the meaning of the herald's cry, "The King is dead. Long live the King!" Only a King too rich to be bribed, too well armed to be frightened can arbitrate effectively at home and act quickly enough if danger develops abroad.

It was to this theory that Maurras converted Bainville, Bourget and many others. How is told in *Au Signe de Flore* and *L'Enquête sur la Monarchie*, the book Maurice Barrès called a "monument to French literature." Doubtless it is, but it is also an amazing record of success. Unknown, unimpressively small, almost stone deaf, and very poor, Maurras, singlehanded, launched the traditionalist revival. But it was not only his arguments that affected others. As Bainville wrote, "Maurras is absolutely disinterested, and this is part of his strength. He seeks neither money nor even literary glory. He could have assured himself a tranquil and agreeable existence. Instead, he has never feared to risk imprisonment. For a government, it is inconvenient to have such a man in the opposi-

tion. Maurras lives only for his ideas and no one has any hold on him."

This accounts for Maurras, but only partially. In reviving the traditional faith in Greek art, Roman government, and the way of living that made France pre-eminent, Maurras did so in the traditional manner, and this has its practical side. Discussing one subject at a time, defining exactly what he means, using only facts for proof, he frees causes so completely from obscurity that the effect of them is seen as inevitable. In the end what he seeks to prove stands clear, "in the sunlight," to quote the Academician, Henry Bordeaux. Maurras' thought enters "without constraint into a perfect form and fills it entirely," André Maurois explained; "fills it with beauty," the widely read critic, René Lalou, added, discussing Maurras' *Les Amants de Venise*. With "everything against him" in the beginning, as André Chaumeix wrote, he was successful, nevertheless. So he was imitated, notably by Thierry Maulnier, who, at twenty-four, made a name with a book on Nietzsche that a Continental critic compared to H. L. Mencken's, "high praise," according to an English review. Following this with works on Goethe, Racine, French poetry and Marxism, Maulnier, respected even by his opponents as the ablest of the younger men, showed how completely he was committed to the traditional manner, and "it was undeniably Maurras who revived the traditions," Henry de Montherlant wrote, acknowledging his own debt to the Royalist writer. But, method aside, what are the traditions? Plato exemplified them. So did Aristotle, Dante and Goethe.

They dealt with profound causes, so their work had depth. Taking in all of life, their work had breadth. Nobly conceived, it towered and had height. Informed with a fundamental rhythm, the beat and pause of a music pleasing to men, it had that extension into time which is known as the fourth dimension. So these artists set a standard by which other artists are judged. For what do we ask about an artist? That he is persuasive we take for granted, otherwise he would not be an artist. But his subject? Is that impor-

tant, or secondary? And his view of it? Is it sane, or, if I may be permitted so to express myself, is it cockeyed? This last is what matters most.

It is here that artists differ, and their effect on others depends on this, on whether or not they are crazy or clairvoyant. If they are clairvoyant, they will have one effect. If they are crazy, they will have another. So it is important to know what their viewpoint is. As to his, Maurras was always clear. In consequence, the French were able to judge him. Why, then, did some of them think him crazy? Apparently because, while he wrote well, he also acted. While he was writing, he traveled a perilous road.

He almost brought on civil war.

He was desperate. Because the French would not restore the monarchy? Hardly! When someone you love is stricken, you do not send for the greatest physician you know of, however far away. You send for the nearest doctor. So when the Dreyfus case opened France to the enemy by disarming France and inaugurating civil war there, Maurras used any means he could find with which to right the balance. Naturally those who did not understand or were opposed because they were profiting from the regime—naturally, such people thought or said that he was crazy. But was he? Like Clemenceau, Maurras realized that the fight for personal liberty had gone far enough.

The time had come to change. As his record shows, Maurras was right. Irritating the man unquestionably was, as the elder La Follette was. But he knew. His prophecies make amazing reading. Seeing that money was being diverted from the army to political purposes, he made his now famous plea "for armament *in proportion* to German armament." In *Kiel and Tangiers* he set down his prediction that French policy would sacrifice unnecessarily "five hundred thousand young French lives," an exact estimate of what eventually happened. Behind a screen of lead twice the weight of anything the French could throw, the Germans advanced to the Marne. Lacking machines, the French had to block the line with

lives. Half a million died who could have been saved if there had been guns and fortifications, the material that experts had asked the government for in vain. So democracy meant death! Committed by his philosophy to conserving life, Maurras demanded defense in his daily paper, *L'Action Française*, which he and Leon Daudet founded in 1908.

It would founder shortly, many thought. Ignored by the press, opposed by the aristocracy, hampered by middle-class indifference, as Simon Arbellot records, it was praised by the Pope, Pius X, and by many cardinals, only to be condemned by Pius XI, then restored to favor by Pius XII. In 1937, led by the young Comte de Paris, the princes of France broke with it, too. But it survived all this.

It survived not only because Maurras, but because others who wrote for it, notably the historian, Jacques Bainville, and that tough, well-informed, fighting polemist, Leon Daudet, were so often, so incredibly right. About reviving the monarchy? Certainly not! While that worked once, it might not work again, but nothing in modern times has altered an iota the truth in the Kings' policy. By carving up Austria and leaving Germany intact, by depending on that prayer meeting, the League of Nations, by abandoning reparations and outposts like Mayence, by yielding to Hitler instead of preparing to back up sound sense, ably expressed, with guns, by failing to foresee that Russia would join hands with Germany, a truth that Maurras cried from the housetops for two years before it happened, the French government paved the way to hell with good intentions. All this Maurras foresaw. That French policy made war inevitable, he knew and proved.

It is there in the record, in black and white, for anyone to read. As to what he wrote in his paper, and in books that have sold widely in France, there is no argument. But was he right in what he *did*? This is debatable. While Poincaré called him "one of the great statesmen of our time," this was because of what he wrote. What he did was to bring on a civil disturbance that reached a tragic, and possibly a temporary climax, on February sixth, 1934. Because of



Maurras, thousands rioted then, and many died. Aware that men do not do this unless they mean to get results, the government disbanded Maurras' army and the Fascist leagues. "But we still have our kitchen knives," Maurras wrote. "If you bring on war with Italy, you will die first," he told Blum.

There are two opinions about the justice of such a threat. Imprisoned for making it, Maurras was set free to find thousands shouting his name. Thousands more subscribed to a fund with which to buy a crown of gold for Maurras. That such enthusiasm was misplaced, many felt sincerely. On the other hand, unprejudiced foreigners got another impression, watching over a hundred thousand men—the type of men who can bite iron and hurt it—crowd into the Velodrome d'Hiver in Paris, or stand around the loudspeakers outside, waiting for Maurras. When he stood up, a speck on that distant platform, they shouted his name till the building shook. "What we need is more men like him," a chauffeur who had fought with Mangin at Verdun told me, "men who say 'no' to this massacre, 'no' to war, and *really* mean it. Tell these orators that they'll die first, as Maurras did, see to it that they do, as Maurras would have done, and they'll get over this habit of making war, with us as the victims, on whomever they happen to hate, and *that's all* that will ever cure them. As my wife says, that's all."

There is something to be said for this point of view. At the same time, it is not the most important thing to keep in mind about Maurras. In his active life, he took part in a counter-revolution, temporary in its significance. While he led the way to Daladier, who stood for French not International purposes, Maurras did more than this elsewhere. In his writing, he dealt with truths that are eternal.

There are revived the standards of one of the great civilizations of all time. So, despite the civil disturbance he created, one by one a majority of the men of letters of the French Academy spoke for him. While only the writers did so, it was known where other members of the Academy stood. A "grand seigneur" like the Duc de la

Force, a scholar as eminent as Cardinal Baudrillart, soldiers like Marshal Pétain, Marshal Franchet d'Esperey, and General Weygand—what they thought could be guessed. Because of Maurras there had been, there might be again, civil war in France. But he had defended France, what really mattered in France, and in 1938 he was elected to the French Academy by twenty votes to twelve.

The poor and handicapped boy who had come to Paris on December second, 1885, had now been officially acknowledged as "a master of French thought." Except for a few inveterate partisans, even his enemies now joined the chorus of praise.

The "Bible of the Republic," so long opposed to him, declared that "the life of Charles Maurras is indissolubly linked to the history of his time."

"His influence is great," *Le Temps* continued, "and not only in France, for it is recognized that the 'Idea Nazionale' in Italy owes him a great deal." "Even those who do not share his political and philosophical ideas," the *Journal des Debats* concluded, "have never bargained when it came to paying their respects" to his search for, and his defense of, "what seemed to him true and beautiful." It was this that the Academy wished to recompense.

"It has added to its membership a great and vigorous spirit who is an honor to his country and who loves his country well."

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## II

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### Siegfried and Scientists

THE French Academy's main duty had always been to conserve standards of good taste in respect to the French language. Founded by Richelieu in 1635, it was made by Napoleon a part of the Institute of France.

This organization was composed of five academies, dedicated, respectively, to "inscriptions et belles lettres," to the "beaux arts," to the sciences, to morals and politics, and to those varied qualities, not all of them literary, honored by the Académie Française.

This last academy was the best known. Composed of forty members, referred to, sometimes sarcastically, as "The Immortals," the French Academy was largely independent of outside control. While the President of the Republic could veto an election, he exercised this privilege as little as he did his other powers.

The Academy elected its own members, and they were supposed to be representative not only of French thought, but of France at its acknowledged best. When a member died, not only writers but any distinguished man could, with some hope of success, seek election to the seat left vacant. Candidates called on all the members. When a successful candidate was received at a public session where the Academicians appeared in their brilliant and expensive uniforms, he was called on to pronounce a eulogy of the dead "immortal" whose place he took. On these occasions Academicians frequently showed their independence, as Marshal Lyautey did when he contrasted the record of the Republic with that of the Monarchy.

Elected to replace Marshal Foch, Marshal Pétain relieved himself of a lifetime's accumulation of dissent.

He lent an emphasis to his predecessor's faults that sent the French home with a headache, for here was an expert, the ablest of them all according to General Pershing, explaining the meaning, the cost, the inadequate result of Foch's famous formula, "Attack, attack, attack!" Nor did Pétain himself escape invidious comment. In accordance with custom, he was welcomed to the Academy by an older member, in this case the poet and pacifist, Paul Valéry. "Welcomed" is possibly not the word to use, for what Valéry had to say about officers and war was touched with acid. "Summoned to membership with a 'don't think yourself too important' " would perhaps be a better description of what happened. That day, as the editor and social historian, Jean Galtier-Boissière, remarked in his monthly review, *Le Crapouillot*, the audience that attended the Academy's session in the old building on the Quai Voltaire "certainly had its money's worth."

It frequently had. Why, then, sarcastic references to "The Immortals"? At a cocktail party in Paris once I heard Lewis Galantière say that "those old dodos do more harm than good," and Galantière knew France as well as how to write a polished, yet lively English. But "why this snooty attitude, why this sniffy air?" his fellow Americans asked him.

There was at least one obvious reason for this. Disposing of a large, inherited income, the Academy gave prizes, often awarding them for mediocre work. "But criticism of the Academy," Richard Le Gallienne wrote, "is founded on a misconception of its purpose, which is not the discovery of budding and eccentric genius, but the recognition and reward of genius that has arrived, of achievement marked by certain elements of permanence." So membership in the Academy was a passport to attention.

A prize awarded by it, even if the choice were unfortunate, meant a wide sale. But the Academy did provoke revolts. Out of one of them grew the Académie Goncourt. Subsidized by the will

of Edmond de Goncourt, this institution counted among its members in 1939 Jean Ajalbert, René Benjamin, Francis Carco, Leon Daudet, Roland Dorgelès, Lucien Descaves, Sacha Guitry, the J. H. Rosnys, and Leo Larguier, and these gentlemen also offered prizes in the name of their academy. But then, so did other organizations and persons who agreed neither with the Goncourt celebrities nor "The Immortals."

The truth is, the French had a passion for giving and taking prizes, for labels and above all for decorations, of which there were more than fifty at the disposition of the government. Of these the Military Medal and the Croix de Guerre, then the Grand Cross and the lesser ranks of the Legion of Honor, and the Palmes Académiques were the better known. But despite competition of this sort, the distinctions accorded by the French Academy survived, as the Academy itself did.

It was as pre-eminent, as unique in its field, as the Collège de France was in the field of education.

This forum of opinion was founded by Francis I, the French King who made a friend of Leonardo da Vinci, and ever since his time professors had been free to say what they liked at the Collège de France. Primarily for graduate students, anyone who wished to could go to the lectures. And to good advantage! In 1939, among the professors there were men of such ability and varying political opinions as Bernard Faÿ, Paul Hazard, Gaston Jèze, André Siegfried and Paul Valéry.

These lecturers were appointed by the government from a list drawn up by the Collège faculty, or from one submitted by the Institute of France. As a member since 1932 of the Académie des Sciences Morales et Politiques, and so of the Institute, and a professor at the College since 1933, André Siegfried was typical of this group. Furthermore, unlike many of his colleagues, his reputation was international, for he was well known in America where he lectured and in England where he was a fellow of All Souls, Oxford.

He was born at Le Havre on April twenty-first, 1875. Of Alsatian ancestry, he came of one of the richest families in France.

A Protestant, in politics Siegfried stood for moderation. Gradually, he came to be regarded as representative of the very best the Republic had to offer. Author of a series of books on America, Canada, England, New Zealand and South America, when it came to his homeland he was an authority on French political geography and on the policies and activities born of the French Revolution.

These he explained calmly and clearly. Because of the dignity and simplicity with which he presented his conclusions, he had a more than ordinary influence, for where such as Tardieu grew sarcastic, Siegfried remained judicious. Where the Herriots were carried away by their emotions, Siegfried kept his balance.

His thesis was that the attitude of the individualist in France toward Church, Monarchy and Bonapartism, derived from the Revolution. But, unlike the American Revolution, the French Revolution did not discriminate against people because of their color.

This new freedom was for all men, "as the gospel of Jesus was," Siegfried explained to me in his home near the Chamber of Deputies in July, 1939.

"The fundamental principle of the French Revolution," he went on, "is that sovereignty comes from below, not from above. While little more than a majority in France now agrees with this conclusion, this majority has been strong enough to prevent class rule and the interference of the Church with the State. The issue between classes and masses is clear. So is the difficulty with the Church. Where the Church denies men the right to think as they please, holding that everything derives from God, from above, the Republicans insist that authority comes from the people, from below. Obviously, a people is made up of individuals, and the individualist faith conflicts not only with the Church, but with privileged classes of any kind, and also with Socialism.

"The Socialists deny men the right to own property personally.

Reaction, far stronger in France than many foreigners realize, defends private property. But it collides with individualism in the field of politics because a majority of the voters have little money and want the government to do something disturbing about their privations. Opposed to them, naturally, are those who have money and want to keep it. An old story! As men acquire property, whether that property be material or intellectual, they tend to favor competent government, a government that will conserve values. 'But we do not wish to be governed by the rich, even if that means better government,' the average Frenchman will tell you."

"A startling statement!"

"It is a fact."

He spoke slowly, almost regretfully. Tall, slender, he sat straight in his chair, his long fingers resting on his knees. "Don't imagine," he continued, "that money has much to do with this attitude. It is due to pride, to jealousy, to a dislike of feeling inferior. Because of this attitude, widespread among the people, governments representing them never dare take a strong hand. People simply will not be interfered with, ordered about, told what to do and made to do it as they were under the Monarchy. So there are relatively few Monarchists in France, few genuine Royalists.

"There are far more Bonapartists, because in times of crisis the French people recognize that they must take strong measures, that they must have a temporary dictator, such as Napoleon was meant to be. This accounts for the backing given Daladier. But his powers are meant to be temporary. They are necessary because the findings of Science are being turned to selfish purposes by dictators who have come into power abroad."

It was Science made possible a long prosperity. But this prosperity depended on machines and machines enslave. Mass production ends individualism. Nor does Communism restore it.

"No principle of the French Revolution justifies anyone in backing Leninism, Fascism or National Socialism," Siegfried told me. "These state doctrines are all fatal to personal independence,"

he went on. "While they have their partisans here, the fight on them has reconciled old enemies in France. As the statements of the Cardinal Archbishop of Paris, Jean Verdier, show, the Roman Catholic Church is now co-operating with the heirs of the French Revolution to help preserve respect for human dignity. For years, Aristide Briand, and before him that great Pope, Leo XIII, worked for this reconciliation."

It was also in 1939, close to the heart of the most eminent of the French Cardinals, Alfred Baudrillart, long a member of the French Academy and Rector of the Catholic Institute, the university the Church maintained in Paris. Like Siegfried, His Eminence realized that the Revolution was not anti-religious, though at times it was anti-clerical.

The Church's authority was restored by Napoleon and the long fight with the Roman Curia that culminated in the separation of Church and State in 1905 was partially adjusted by Briand when he persuaded the French Parliament after the war to allow an ambassador to be sent to the Vatican. Now "Hitler's attack on the Church" had drawn together the Republicans in France and "the Servant of the Servants of God on Earth," Siegfried reminded me. But as "the former Cardinal Pacelli, now Pius XII, sees, if science is not to become a monster men cannot control," its discoveries must be subject to what widely respected priests like Baudrillart "describe as a moral veto." Here not only Siegfried, but many other distinguished thinkers are in accord with the Church, but exactly what they mean by "a moral veto" has puzzled many people. What they mean is best introduced by a reminder. In approaching this question, it is well to recall that scientists have thrown millions out of work by their inventions, nor is this all they have done.

They have "equipped the ungodly, dictators with an unholy purpose," and made it possible for them to impose their will by supplying them deadly gases, and poisons, as well as airplanes with which to attack cities such as London and Paris, and they have done this without consulting any superior moral authority that might



well have forbidden them to release the discoveries from which dictators profited and from which workers suffered. In other words, such an authority might have imposed "a moral veto." In the practical world such vetoes have been imposed for years.

A well-known American oil company is known to have suppressed a formula for making gasoline cheaply.

It had oil that came from the earth to sell. Because it had workers to keep employed, the French government once turned down an offer to get iodine from seaweed cheaply. Other examples of vetoes imposed by authority have been heard of, nor did scientists always object to them. With such men as Siegfried and the Cardinals, many scientists agreed.

These scientists formed a distinguished company in France in 1939. Prominent among them were Prince Louis de Broglie, and his elder brother, Maurice, the Duc de Broglie. Winner of the Nobel Prize, the Prince had distinguished himself as a physicist by his studies of the "quanta" theory. In his richly equipped private laboratory, the Duke had experimented with radio-activity and the release of energy by bombarding atoms. Both the de Broglies were members of the Institute. So was George Claude, inventor of liquid air, modern lighting systems, and methods of extracting wealth and power from sea water. Another member of the Institute, Ernest Esclançon, was director of the Paris observatory, and, like the Duc de Grammont, famous as an astronomer.

It was Esclançon who perfected "the talking clock" which told inquirers the time over the telephone. Among other inventors famous in France were Paul Langevin to whom submarine safety owes so much and who made a specialty of relativity; Louis Lumière, originator of the motion picture; Charles Fabry, an authority on telescopes, periscopes and other optical aids; Paul Pascal, whose discoveries were of help to the French during the 1914 war; Arsène d'Arsonval, who revolutionized the use of electricity in medicine; Jean Perrin, another Nobel Prize Winner and Academician; Emile Borel, director of the National Center for Applied Scientific Re-

search—but the list of inventors is too long to mention all who achieved distinction.

The same thing is true of physicians. André Mayer was long the government's adviser in respect to medicine, though surgeons such as Thierry de Martel, whose operations on the brain drew students from all over the world, were better known to the public. Spectacular despite themselves, the surgeons aroused French pride in something done in masterly fashion, and in those who did it so expertly. No such feeling of admiration, however, turned attention to the Joliot-Curies.

They were studied for reasons far more practical. Like his wife, Irene, elder daughter of the discoverers of radium, Pierre and Marie Curie, and sister of that fashionably dressed visitor to America, Eve Curie, Frederic Joliot, winner with his wife of the Nobel Prize for chemistry in 1935, had worked for years on the question of producing heat inexpensively. So far, so good! But occasionally scientists talk. Occasionally they have something to say, and one afternoon one of them with a sense of humor revealed that producing heat inexpensively involved disintegrating the atom. Here was a genial idea, but one inherently disturbing.

A revelation meant to be funny turned out to be anything but amusing.

It raised the whole question of what moralists mean by the veto. Hearing that the Joliot-Curies were studying how to destroy the earth's cohesion, the thoughtful began to regard this pair much as a bird regards a serpent. What if the Germans, too, should discover this secret? No moral scruple would keep *them* from practicing on France. In addition, unlike her thesis on the alpha rays of polonium, Madame Joliot's political views provoked dispute, for it was reported that she was a Communist. If she was not, then how far to the Left was she? No reassuring answer was ever made to this question, so when Madame Joliot accepted Blum's offer to act as master of national scientific research, many began to feel—as easily frightened people will—that some check should be kept on

scientists. What if Madame Joliot's talents should be used in the service of Internationalism, rather than Nationalism? Many asked this question seriously, only to learn when the war began that Madame Joliot was opposed to Stalin.

This was obvious from a manifesto she signed, a manifesto that began with the phrase, "We, the Intellectuals of France." Condemning Stalin for his agreement with Hitler, this greeting to the public amused the French because it was signed by only a few scientists and by none of the intellectuals, however many of them may have been Communists. But scientists can take care of themselves in France. Soon apologists were explaining that Madame Joliot's lack of humor in describing herself, along with her friends, as "the Intellectuals of France," like her concern with politics, was anything but typical. While George Claude had put his immense wealth at the service of Charles Maurras, he, too, was an exception. For the most part, French scientists had always stuck to their last. Perhaps this was why they were successful.

They had for years left the business of forming opinion to those who specialized less in research than in the conclusions of education.

### III

## Valéry and Writers

THE education of the French was revised by that authority on everything, the first Napoleon. Annoyed, even alarmed by the way the French insisted on thinking for themselves despite an imperial "leave it to me," His Majesty acted. But long before he became the Emperor of the French, he had foreseen the necessity of doing what he did, the need of controlling the emotions as well as the minds of men. Standing at the tomb of Jean Jacques Rousseau, the young Bonaparte, then First Consul, said to Stanislas de Girardin that "it would have been better for France if that man had never existed."

"Why?"

"Because he brought on the French Revolution."

"And *you* complain of that?" Girardin gasped, staring at the dictator who had profited from patching together the pieces left by the Revolution.

"Oh, well," General Bonaparte answered, "the future will show whether it would not have been better for France if neither Rousseau nor I had ever existed."

The man destined to be Emperor foresaw the future that Rousseau had made inevitable. In England Edmund Burke and Hume had denounced the doings of this upstart, Rousseau, a son of French Protestants living in exile in Geneva. But Burke and Hume were in England. Napoleon was in France, facing the actual difficulties of enforcing a dictatorship that Rousseau had looked forward to with what Sir Frederick Pollock described as "equanimity." As

Pollock shows in his key to history, *An Introduction to the History of the Science of Politics*, these difficulties were multiplied by the effect of Rousseau on the French people. Rousseau had convinced them that those who did not think like Rousseau were not only wrong, but wicked. In consequence, the French people had pushed every Revolutionary leader, from Robespierre to Napoleon, into foreign wars.

These wars were intended to punish the wicked. As for the wicked, they reacted. Incurable they were unquestionably. But they had a way with them.

It consisted this time in flinging the righteous back into France.

This lesson was anything but lost on Napoleon. Seeing the effect of emotions aroused by agitators, as he grew more powerful Napoleon throttled opinion more and more. As First Consul, he suppressed all but a few papers, and these, as he expressed it, were able to give him "a recognized guarantee of their republican principles." As Emperor, he went even further, writing to his Minister of Police, Fouché, on April twenty-second, 1805, that the time had come to suppress all papers except one.

This he kept under his thumb. Simultaneously, the twenty or so universities throughout France were taken in charge by the central government. Formerly, they had been organizations, privately endowed, free to develop independently. Napoleon put an end to that, and what Napoleon began his successors continued, extending their control to the lower schools where the majority of the children went for the sound reason that it cost money to go elsewhere. If they were sent to private or to Church schools, it was expensive. Furthermore, it made no appreciable difference, for even these schools were supervised by the state. So were all teachers. If the public school teachers did not conform to the official program, they were discharged or barred from advancement.

This tendency to insist on conformity survived even the reforms that followed the fall of Napoleon III. Even that disguised disaster, the victory won in 1918, effected no great change. Despite a

"success" that cost 1,700,000 lives and an incredible number of wounded and crippled, despite exhausted resources, despite the failure to collect reparations and the fact that in twenty years France lost every advantage that the Treaty of Versailles had imposed on Germany, in the field of education nothing was done to force the French to study realities. Nothing that interferes with official ideas should be allowed was the slogan most frequently repeated after the war. Of course, not everyone joined in this chorus. To the rule, that scholar and statesman, Leon Bérard, was an exception.

He insisted on a classical education while he was a minister in the Poincaré cabinet. But his successor, the Radical, François Albert, undid his work. Appointed by Blum, Jean Zay, also a Jew, was continued in power as master of French education by Chauvets and Daladier. He unified public instruction. Formerly, for children from six to eighteen, there were two courses of instruction, one free. For the other it was necessary to pay.

These were united by Zay. No charge was made now. There was one course for children from six to eleven, another for those older, and in this second course pupils could choose among studies with a view to profiting from special courses offered in technical schools. Examinations revealed a student's capability, and families were advised by professors as to what their children should attempt. But young men and women were forced to take what amounted to a bachelor's degree either in the arts or the sciences. If they did not, a remunerative future in all established fields was closed to them. Where it was ability that counted in other countries, in France education acted as a passport to success. But once the approved degrees were taken, facilities branched out like a fan. To prepare the young to take advantage of them, there were special schools, technical and cultural, civil and military. In the universities, however, students, for the most part, devoted themselves to Law, Letters, Medicine, Science and Pharmacy. After studying in the provinces, many of them came to Paris.

There the University, in Blum's time, was put under the control of a physician, Dr. Gustave Roussy.

This man was a politician, but he was more than that. Of Swiss Protestant origin and very wealthy, a specialist in cancer, he maintained his own hospital near the capital.

Those who criticized him insisted that he was sure of himself to the point of being dictatorial, that his attitude was much the same as that of the English statesman who supposedly said, "What I don't know is not knowledge." But no one denied that Roussy worked constantly and effectively. As Rector of the University and so technical director of the whole educational system, his program was meant to make others "think as he did," and he thought what leaders of the Popular Front thought. But what Napoleon could not do entirely, Zay and Roussy had difficulty in doing. In part, this was due to Catholic teaching. With at least one assumption of the Church, the French were inclined to agree without debate.

They recognized that the tendency of men to prey on their fellow men is such that men have to be policed, from infancy and fundamentally. Education does this police work. So does religion. As for religion, it has the advantage of dealing early in life and from then on with emotion.

A religious appeal is far more to the feeling than the mind and most men are ruled by their emotion. Furthermore, they run wild unless their instinct to prey on others is taken in hand. That is done effectively, perhaps most effectively, by the Church, many Frenchmen were convinced. Even when they did not believe in the way this was done, they admitted that without the Church society would be lost because it could not possibly hire a sufficient number of soldiers or policemen to keep order if the restraint imposed by religion were entirely or too suddenly removed. Taking account of what truth there is in this conclusion, Catholic teaching in France was rendered notable by the scholarship of Monseigneur Baudrillard.

The training of this distinguished prince of the Church—a personage whose position corresponded to the one so long occupied

by Cardinal Gibbons in Baltimore—had been catholic in the broadest sense of the term. Before becoming a priest, Alfred Baudrillart went through the famous French school for professors, the *Ecole Normale*. Later he went to the University. After this lay education in an atmosphere where free thought was encouraged, he became a priest. Once ordained, he began teaching, for it was not only as a Cardinal but also as a professor that Baudrillart was to impress French opinion. For years he was Rector of the Catholic Institute in Paris.

This privately endowed university continued the traditions of the Sorbonne as founded by Abélard. To its staff of teachers in modern times, Baudrillart, who had had General Gamelin among his own pupils, appointed Jacques Maritain, an authority on the philosophy of Saint Thomas Aquinas. Described by an enthusiastic young American girl as "a professor who is as handsome as he is lucid," Maritain was a convert to Catholicism.

He had grown up as a Protestant, but he was not the only distinguished member of the Catholic teaching staff in France. For the most part, however, others contributed more to the fame of the order to which they belonged than to their own personal celebrity. Watched by the Rector, the Jesuits, the Oratorians, and the Dominicans taught in preparatory schools like the *Collège Stanislas*, the *Ecole Fenelon* and the *Ecole Bossuet*, and in other schools elsewhere than in Paris. Primary education was directed by the bishops.

The opinion of the bishops had an effect on the public even politically. Primate of Gaul, the title given the chief of the first diocese founded in France, the Cardinal Archbishop of Lyons, Monsieigneur Gerlier, was once a lawyer and was well known for his support of the Republic. Another point of view than his was that of the late André du Bois de la Villarabel, a Royalist whose ideas contrasted with those that prevailed under Pius XI. Referring a dispute with his vicar general to the civil courts instead of keeping it within a purely ecclesiastical jurisdiction, he was asked by the Vatican to retire from his post as Archbishop of Rouen.



He did so, but only after a controversy that filled columns in the press.

This tendency of the French to think for themselves was usually far more obvious outside the Church than in it. However much able men like Zay and Roussy supported official teaching, its weaknesses were often thrown into relief by any Frenchman who felt disposed to criticize.

This happened even at the Sorbonne. Though for years men like Albert Chatelet, in charge of secondary education under Roussy, were the rule, men like Albert Rivaud the exception, Rivaud one day learned that his attitude had been justified in sensational terms. As a young pupil of his from overseas remarked, to the edification of the French who "understood American," "he's tops now, sitting pretty." In other words, Rivaud had been right.

This was shown to be the case when what Rivaud had been saying about Racism for years was borne out by Hitler himself. On December fourth, 1938, confirming all Rivaud had said, Hitler explained publicly to the Sudeten Germans the niceties of his educational program.

His policy, he said, was to take children away from their parents when they were only ten years old, then force them through his type of school, afterward putting them in military, semi-military and labor battalions. With these they were to remain more or less closely allied for life, "for fear they might fall back into error." To take children from their parents at ten and see to it that "they were never free again," Hitler specified, was National Socialism's educational policy.

The danger of this Rivaud preached constantly. If the state was to interfere with parents, religion, education, and ways of earning a living, intruding its fingers, reinforced by the centralization of governmental power, into men's private lives, then individual liberty was finished. Equally reminiscent of a point of view once honored were the miracle and mystery plays given before the cathedrals in Paris and Chartres under the direction of Gustave Cohen,

professor of French literature at the Sorbonne. To the whole question of the past, Bernard Faÿ, at the College of France, lent an explosive emphasis when he traced the connections of the Free Masons with the Revolution, criticizing them for what he described as an attempt to use a spiritual idea for a selfish purpose. To say that all men are free, when they are not, that they are equal, when they are not, Faÿ insisted, was to throw them on their own. Disorganized, they became the prey, naturally, of the best organized gang; so the Revolution led to Robespierre and the Terror, and, when Robespierre fell, continued its inevitable course, to culminate in Napoleon.

This history was repeated in Germany. "In modern times," Faÿ declared, "the real heir of the French Revolution was Adolf Hitler"—a provocative statement. In contrast to the controversy that this aroused was the fact that Paul Hazard passed relatively unchallenged.

There was little in Hazard's inquiry into the evolution of ideas in Europe that he was not able to sustain, but his pre-eminent position at the College of France Hazard had to share with Valéry. Unlike Hazard, Paul Valéry held that literary composition was at its best in poetry. Sustaining this conclusion with a consideration of esthetics that many maintained was the ablest heard in years, Valéry crowded his lecture room. Savants came there, and, strangely enough, the smart society crowd. It was "chic" to quote Valéry! But most remarked among the professor's hearers were the young people who were interested in forming a new world divorced from the faults of the old.

This vital need lead Valéry to criticize even Marshal Pétain, outstanding representative of the men of action, men whom Maurras always defended. But where Maurras rushed into the heart of life, trailing comment behind him, Valéry placed comment before him, moulding it into an artistic form as nearly perfect as he could make it. To do this is the individual's only business on earth, Valéry maintained, because, having done it, the individual could

benefit from the reflection of what he had done. Having created the best that was in him and given it a permanent form, he could profit continually from a study of himself at his best.

This theory carried to a logical conclusion the precepts of Edgar Allan Poe, Rimbaud, Baudelaire and Mallarmé, that Mallarmé who said that "to suggest is to create." Like Valéry, in 1939 Patrice de la Tour du Pin was a distinguished member of this school. Using sound and imagery like jewels set in a carefully determined idea, they contrasted "art for art's sake" with the principles of the Roman school in France.

These principles were revived by Jean Moréas who transmitted them to Maurras and Raymond de la Tailhède. Later they were accepted as gospel by Noel de la Houssaye, Xavier de Magallon and Pierre Pascal. Henry Charpentier divided his allegiance. At times he followed the principles of the Roman school.

These prescribe a strict adherence to fact and call on the artist to write as Homer and Virgil did. Believing, as Verlaine said, that "the sea than all cathedrals is more fair," setting down facts, describing them exactly, the writer is supposed to moralize about them, to grow didactic. But Charpentier does not always do this. At times he reconstructs the life he sees around him. To do just this is the mission of the artist, for, after all, what good is art if it cannot take the apparently unrelated facts that men see around them and reorganize them into a synthesis that explains them? This is Valéry's question, simplified. In Valéry's own presentation of his ideas, it is only fair to add, there is always brilliant sword play. Thrusts go home there, for this eminent poet and esthetician rarely misses the opportunity to take an at times dazzling advantage of men's dissatisfaction with the life they see around them.

This dissatisfaction is due mainly to the fact that men see life bit by bit, in flashes, never as a whole, so it seems to lack meaning.

Its purpose is never entirely clear.

This is disturbing. Realizing why, Valéry senses the satisfaction that comes from creating a unified whole, an entity where every-

thing is on view and everything is explained. Beginning at the beginning, we watch everything take its place, fit into a pattern, or, as in a story, we read from the start to the end, until we know all about it.

This is satisfying. Such a complete orientation of causes toward a main, an intensified effect, done skilfully, charmingly, is a work of art, and a work of art stands apart from the vicissitudes of life, on its own, poised and balanced, complete. Complete in an incomplete world, it is a source of satisfaction.

It is a monument to the individual, the only one that preserves the individual at his best. As nearly perfect as anything can be, it endures as long as anything ever does, and because it is well done and remains so, it is a constant source of inspiration. Teaching these conclusions and doing so brilliantly, Valéry became a major prophet of the major religion in France, individualism, for Valéry believed in what the average Frenchman believed in, namely himself. To Valéry all any man knows is himself. If he is equal to life's problems, he will make the most of himself, but he will resist any pressure except the pressure which originates within him, for what precedent, tradition advise him to do, what invention, progress force him to do, these turn a man into a caricature of himself.

They remake him into something that he is not really, so Valéry insists that "tradition and progress are the two great enemies of human kind." Tradition refuses to die, though what worked well once might not work so well again, and progress changes so constantly that it is impossible to have confidence in its findings. No sooner had the great French scientist, Marcellin Berthelot, declared that there was nothing more to be learned about chemistry than the Curies discovered radium.

The certainties that scientists announce one day are revealed the next day as uncertainties.

These uncertainties are exterior to the individual.

They mask the real truth which is within you, Valéry insists. Naturally, teaching of this sort reinforced the Frenchman's con-

viction that he was equal to the business of life, including the business of deciding what kind of government was best and the possibly more complicated business of understanding a great personality. But if you do understand such an artist, you are, in a way, his equal, for understanding demands great qualities, just as creation does.

The instinct to create is eternal, so the artist—and we are all more or less artists—should confine the *me* within him to a form that cannot be affected by adverse conditions. Well, what cannot be so affected? What holds the world together? What forces discordant elements to conform, to cohere, to co-operate? Without any question whatever this unifying element is what we call rhythm, the rhythm men feel within them, the beat and pause of the throbbing heart that makes life go on. Fundamentally pleasing to men, it must be present in any creative work, or that work will not endure, and what makes men describe any creation as a work of art is the fact that it is pleasing. Because it is pleasing, it endures, but it is agreeable to men really because it is alive with that rhythm which men miss if it is not present. Unified by the rhythm that makes a work of art what it is, the *me* within you, once confided to that form, will constantly please you, provide you with an image of yourself at your best, an example to emulate.

This example is the *me* within you set free, relieved of outside pressure. But in life itself, men are subject constantly to this pressure. In life itself, they are constantly being determined by conditions exterior to themselves. Resist them, Valéry counsels! In a great artist like Goethe, what mattered? The truth within him, not the falsity outside him! Profiting from Goethe's example, the artist seeks to escape "in his work the instability, the incoherence, the in-consequence" that he finds all around him in life. In poetry this can be done. How, Poe explained in his famous essay on composition. The formative influences exterior to the individual, while they can be barred from poetry, enter the novel, otherwise the novel has no meaning.

The novel must deal with the life outside you, so Valéry pushes aside this artistic form. But in his own poems he often refines abstractions till the sense evaporates, so his effect on others is explained by his prose.

This plea for individualism has reinforced independent thinking in France, but as a representative of the subjective school Valéry has had to face the reproaches of the objectivists. Like Maurras, most writers affecting French opinion in Daladier's time were primarily objective writers, that is they described the life around them, and then interpreted and explained. But while they are alike in this respect, they differ in another. Either they rush into the existence around them and live, or they retreat from it disgusted, as André Gide did. With an art described for years as exquisite, this famous stylist made a practice of parading his distaste for much that makes life possible, and in his quarrels with Stalin and Blum he made his aversions especially obvious.

A Protestant, Gide was a contrast to the Catholic apologist, Paul Claudel, who escaped the present by reviving the past. Nor was this all.

He liked to read about the past. After serving as Ambassador in Washington and Brussels, Claudel retired in order to study the Bible. As for his writings, admirers found there what they find in Bossuet—noble conceptions repeated in familiar terms. When he was vulgar, Claudel was deliberately so, salting his verses and prose with the speech of the peasantry.

This escape into the past another Catholic writer, François Mauriac, of the French Academy, never attempted. Instead, he let the present torture him, a tendency evident also in writers as different as George Duhamel, Romain Rolland, Francis Carco with his preference for "closed houses" and "empty rooms," and Marcel Jouhandeau. But the depressing effect of this was counter-balanced, happily, by writers who enjoyed life and told why.

The brothers, Jean and Jerome Tharaud, for example, always made "the entertaining most" of a wide range of material, for they

were traveled men. Like the de Goncourts, they wrote books together, and finally, as the representative of both brothers the elder of the two was elected to the French Academy, where Marcel Prévost was a figure typical of French society. For years Prévost kept confiding to the public what girls and young women think, so at times he was startling. But he was less so in his famous *Les Demi-Vierges* than in *Le Moulin de Nazareth*, the story of a Peeping Tom and the servant girl he victimized.

A healthier atmosphere—and incidentally far lovelier women—are met with in Valéry Larbaud's worldly and at times perfumed pages, but this man who "knows how to live," to quote Willard Huntington Wright, has to stand comparison with a woman. With *Duo* and *Le Toutonier*, Colette capped the climax of a career that drew more praise than had been accorded any woman in France since George Sand. Unlike George Sand, Colette wrote under her family name, and never liked to have her first name mentioned.

It was Gabrielle. "But that is a detail. Forget it, as you Americans say," Colette told me, bending over blue paper in a darkened room overlooking the Champs Elysées. Light disturbed her. Cats she loved. For years it was thought she owed her success to that born storyteller, Willy, her first husband. But when he died and she married Henry de Jouvenel, it was suggested that her husbands owed more to her than she to them.

The *Claudine* series made her famous. Later her autobiographies, *The Vagabond* and *What Claudine Did Not Tell*, revealed even more about her. Her insistence that women cannot get along without men, she strengthens with a question: Why not make the best of it? But she does even more, critics, her many readers insist. As Janet Flanner's translation of Colette's *Chéri* shows, this French woman makes characters, the facts of life start up on the printed page. Once alive, her characters adjust themselves, often graciously, always dramatically to their problems. Many learned secrets of writing from her and were honest enough to say so.

These others were less effective, on the whole, than Colette,

however, for, when it came to dealing with life, Colette concentrated where others spread out their meaning as Martin du Gard did in his study of a French family, a consideration of the typical that alarmed him much less than it did Julien Green, the American who wrote so successfully in French. Unfortunately, his unrelieved pessimism repelled, so many readers turned for relief to the more romantic Jean Paul Sartre, or to Louis Guilloux. Like Sartre, Guilloux was still young in Daladier's time.

A Breton and a Communist, he had written effectively "of the people and for the people." Jean Giono also had a following of this sort as the second third of the twentieth century began. But the writing of both of them was weakened by partisan preferences inadequately sustained, and by youth and insufficiently tested judgment. What remained was a rich enthusiasm, admirable in its way, but not always pleasing to the thoughtful. In consequence, the main interest was elsewhere.

It was an interest capitalized, in so far as what is called "smart" society was concerned, by four very different writers. Finding his subjects in England, André Maurois, whose family name was Hertzog, entertained the French so well that he was elected to the French Academy shortly after Maurras was. Even so, he entertained the French less perhaps than such popular writers as Paul Morand and Maurice Dekobra. But what a man, this Dekobra! Nothing escaped him when he traveled, his readers were led to suppose. Nevertheless, he did tend to concentrate on details. Returning from America in the days of prohibition, he stood behind his private bar in Paris, smiling. "In America," he remarked to a caller, "everyone dreams of Paris."

"Why?"

"Because France and Paris are synonyms for liberty. Americans are enchanted here in Paris to find no detectives in the hall, asking haughtily, 'Is the lady with you your wife?' Besides, in Paris, one sees incomparable works of art, broad boulevards, avenues, even streets that give on gorgeous perspectives. And one sees every-



where exquisite women, and one can drink what one likes without risking a visit to prison."

The French diplomat, Paul Morand, had much the same attitude toward the foreign scene, with which he was widely familiar, as Dekobra. Masters of epigram, both of them investigated "love and other details" far and wide in the world. While Henry de Monthlerant did this, too, he did so at home. Most fashionable of the fashionable novelists who came to the front after 1918, timidity may have accounted for Monthlerant's attitude toward life, and women. In any case, it led him to exaggerate, and this made for brutality on the printed page. In the novel Monthlerant published in 1939, *Les Lepreuses*, this was obvious. But if the author's hero was something less than a man, facing death he was at least a gentleman.

The thought was comforting, in view of all that Monthlerant had told the public about his hero in this and other books. Furthermore, there was another comforting conclusion in this novel. For years Monthlerant's heroine, Solange, had been pursuing this hero who was "no man, but a gentleman." In *Les Lepreuses*, this pursuit comes to an end, a relief for which many duly thanked God.

They felt that she had suffered enough, this charming reminder of much that made French society attractive. Victim of one of those physical attractions that are sometimes difficult to explain, she had gone after her man, but his attitude toward her was such that many French men and women hoped that, if she ever snared him, she would choke him to death, or bite in the clinches—in short, do something to express the public's resentment. Monthlerant's description of this affair had not endeared him to the French in general. In general, Frenchmen liked to say to such a woman, "Come on, darling, and have a drink." In general, writers in France showed a more manly attitude, not only toward women but everything, than Monthlerant's hero did.

This very manliness made them popular. Writing like soldiers riding to war, Leon Daudet, Roland Dorgelès, Henri Béraud and

Pierre MacOrlan pleased a wide public. But so did writers definitely Left, notably André Malraux, Jules Romains and André Saurès.

These last three, all revolutionists, differed. With a lyricism reminiscent of Swinburne discussing Webster, Saurès literally prostrated himself before genius, or his idea of it. In contrast to this tendency to indulge in a series of genuflections was the attitude of Romains. Nothing so individual as genius interested Romains. Instead, he studied the crowd. What accounted for crowd reactions? What united crowds? What inflamed one with a single idea? For years Romains analysed the crowd, trying to discover its "soul," what he called the "unanism," the meaning of mass demonstrations. Such laboratory work has its value doubtless. But it never tempted the gayest, handsomest and most popular of all the younger writers, that genius or near-genius, André Malraux. From the first Malraux was a man of action. And what action! A Communist with his sword drawn, an aviator who flew far and wide, always fighting and reporting brilliantly what he saw, romance lent his helmeted head a halo, but he will be judged by other standards than those women, and even men, find appealing.

He will be judged as an artist. As an artist, he has a superior claim on the attention, for, of all influences in France, that of the artist always affected opinion most. Interpreting fundamental conceptions, tendencies alive in all men, the artists said best of all what others were thinking, thus focusing the attention.

This intensification centered the opinion that always ruled in France on the goal it had in mind.

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## IV

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### Moderns and Domergue

THE France so often described as "a work of art" was carved out by the sword, the French officer and military critic, Charles La Gaulle, remarks. But soldiers were not entirely responsible for this. Prompted by emotion, all men express themselves either in thought or action, but they also tend to specialize. Depending on what their innate talent happens to be, they tend to develop more in the field of thought than in the field of action, or to talk rather than act. In France in the field of action men like Philip the Fair, Henry IV and Napoleon were supreme. But what prompted such men to do what they did? Public opinion, unquestionably, or, in any case, that portion of public opinion which could make itself felt effectively. In France, from the beginning, what made it effective in the end was always the fact that artists conditioned it.

They gave it point and purpose.

They dressed it for the parade, indicated surely and certainly the direction that men's activities should take. No one can do this so well as an artist can. No one can rearrange so well the disordered longings of men until they are channeled toward a single intention, no one can do this so persuasively as an artist can, and the world is ruled by persuasion. Except for short periods, police and armies are helpless against persuasion.

They cannot long force men as a whole to do what most men dislike and have been persuaded is stupid or needless, so men of action only carry out what artists decide should be done.

This is admitted. But what kind of persuasion endures? Obviously, an artist is the most persuasive of men, otherwise he would not be regarded as an artist, but what determines his future? Assuming that his subject is important, that he has style, a way of saying things that is effective, he is still dependent on the material he uses. Some colors fade. But if he chooses the more enduring, a superior rather than an inferior material to work with, if he depends on facts rather than theories, on truths that have a lasting rather than a temporary significance, his work survives.

It may be lost sight of for a time, but it will be rediscovered when sound proof is needed.

The proof an artist uses, critics like Aristotle and Taine remind us, is conditioned, in the first place, by whom the artist is addressing, by whether he is addressing a crowd, a council or a king.

This French history shows. In France artists of two kinds have affected the future. As the Middle Ages drew to a close, one kind gathered in the Church. Influenced by Saint Thomas Aquinas, these priests persuaded the barons to accept the rule of a single chief. "A single chief is best," Saint Thomas said. Concentrating on the barons who controlled the people, the clerics persuaded them to establish the royal rule that Saint Thomas had advocated in the councils of the Church. As their records show, these priests were able to do what they did because they were writers of distinction, artists in persuasion.

They used sound material, as Joan of Arc reminded the French when they forgot Saint Thomas' advice. As she realized, only a united France was strong enough to ward off the invader. You must all die sometime, she told her compatriots, so why not die gloriously, for something worth while, for France, she asked them. Drawing a sword, she set them an example. Burned at the stake by the English, she died for France, immortalizing her idea. But if she was herself a poem, her memory lives on, widely influential, because others dramatized her message. While she provided the material, she survives because of the art with which priests and

others later kept alive her story. Due to their great gift for persuasion, Joan's meaning is still as clear as it is simple. In effect what she said was, "in co-operation lies salvation." But a co-operation directed by whom? This question Joan answered in one way, Jean Jacques Rousseau in another.

The king Joan preferred, Rousseau rejected. Facing a crowd, not a council or a king, he appealed to men's emotions rather than to their minds, as Joan and the artists who re-created her had done. Dealing with barons and bishops, or a king, they could do this, but, as psychologists have amply demonstrated, most men are ruled by their feelings. Unless faith sustains them or they have been trained to discriminate, they are afraid that others will take advantage of them. Justly so, perhaps! Knowing this, Rousseau appealed to men's hearts, not their judgment, rousing the crowd till it got out of hand. In the welter that followed, Rousseau's significance was forgotten.

It is worth recalling that, where the Church represented a group of artists who established the rule of a single chief, Rousseau was a single artist who imposed the rule of many chiefs. To this rule Napoleon put an end, restoring order.

This remedy was examined presently in the light of traditional standards, for, as education spread, more people came in contact with these enduring criterions. Where Rousseau is little read now, Racine and Molière are, and what marks such artists off from emotional men like the Genevan is their habit of using only the best material, facts that cannot be denied. If they employed extremes, it was only to bend them toward a conclusion that cannot be disputed. By co-ordinating values until they point to such a conclusion, a great artist establishes the truth, and truth has an enduring stability.

It is this stability that creates a feeling of peace. If men do not feel it within them, if they are not at peace with themselves, they are unhappy. If they do not see it around them, if their world is not at peace, they do something to change things for the better, and that this was likely to happen in France was evident after the war.

But what form would the new world take? Though many politicians still referred to Rousseau, they rarely cited his arguments. Like Hugo's prophecies, these had proved ridiculous.

The French were still individualists, however. Praise of Valéry showed this, and Siegfried insisted that the French still believed in "rule from below," but that they were open to conviction Maurras' plea for "rule from above" amply demonstrated. Only his demand for a hereditary dictator of the Capetian line was regarded with suspicion. Despite this, he was successful.

He was successful because he had what the French demand in an artist, a great subject soundly conceived, and style, the elegance and wit traditional in France. That artists must have these qualities, accepted writers showed. Elsewhere the fact was sometimes less evident. Relatively indifferent to music, the French let musicians do as they pleased. Nevertheless, eccentric invasions were resisted.

The traditional elegance persisted, along with a tendency to "trip a light, fantastic toe," a wit due less to Lulli, Louis XIV's Italian music master, than to a native French delight in the clever use of contrast. When this is lacking, the French revolt, but their attitude toward music had other causes. Their authors influenced them. As Alphonse Daudet records, Victor Hugo and Leconte de Lisle were among the illustrious in France who "disliked music."

This dislike was accentuated by people who described themselves as "very musical," a rather pretentious way of suggesting that music is more entertaining than other arts. Where others like music, these people "go mad about it," though, as Theodore de Banville said, "most of them hardly know the difference between a piano player and a composer," a difference Shakespeare marked when he said, "the play's the thing." Here Hugo and the musicians were in competition. Though music renders drama incompletely because it cannot explain it, it does bring sound to bear directly on the emotions, and this is what Hugo did, using words "full of sound and fury," often "signifying nothing." Because he wanted

a thing to be so, and said it was so, did not make it so. Furthermore, he had little excuse for his shouting.

He knew what Sidney Lanier proved, that in poetry more subtle musical effects are possible than in any form where notes are mathematically limited. For years Lanier's conclusions have been known to the French.

They have admired composers more because of their tunes than their genius. For this reason, César Franck, a Belgian by birth, had a hard time in Paris, though his being a Belgian had nothing to do with it. Sheer dislike of the Germans, however, did delay Wagner's day in the capital. In time, though, the vague dreams, the undefined desires, the startling contrasts modern music expresses began drawing audiences unsure of what they wanted. Without telling listeners what to do about it, modern music pounded into life a disordered reaction. Even so, the witty elegance of the past did not yield ground to any great extent. Debussy came, and was admired, as his followers were. But such melodious operas as Louis Aubert's *Habanera* and Gustave Charpentier's *Louise*, like Camille Saint-Saëns' *Samson et Dalila*, always ended by dominating harsher effects. As for Darius Milhaud's plea for dissonance, as curious a confession as Duhamel's claim that obscurity has a place in art, it was counter-balanced in France by the rich feeling, the classic instrumentation of Alfred Bachelet, Noel Gallon and others. So, too, if Roger Ducasse's work was a continuation of Faure tinted with Debussy, the survivals of old France in his music accounted for such popularity as it had.

This was obvious from the sort of music applauded in the cafés. In the cafés the less sensational, the more harmonious progressions toward a climax drew the most applause.

A strange place to hear music, a café? "Not at all," Jean Cocteau once retorted, explaining that good taste in France did not depend on having a lot of money to spend. Furthermore, thanks to the excellent training provided in the conservatories by the state, there were many competent performers among the French and they

got work where they could find it, so the cafés had representative programs, well executed. If individuals like Robert Casadessus, the pianist, and Jacques Thibaud, the violinist, became stars of the concert stage in France, it was not from lack of competition. In concert halls and cafés, moreover, music was pure. Frequently Cocteau called attention to the fact that it was not corrupted there by those additions from other arts in which the theater specialized.

This same fight for classic purity went on among sculptors in France for years. In their studios the elderly Aristide Maillol was respected, but the massed effects, the fluidity reminiscent of a percheron horse in action, results due to his employing thick-ankled peasant girls as models, seemed to evoke an admiration less enthusiastic than that accorded Despiau's nudes and portraits. Like Maillol, Despiau was a classicist, but, despite his austerity, his rigorous, close-cut lines, there was a serenity in his statues that both held and soothed the attention. In the work of Bouchard, Landowsky and Maxime Réal del Sarte, there was apparent this same respect for the traditional values, for the harmonious, the pleasing, rather than the too obviously startling. Guénot and Yencesse, much younger men, in their figures of women, standing or lying down, also recaptured the grace of the French sculptors of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, but their work was original, in no way imitative. Laurens and Albert Giacometti, a Swiss, were sought out, too, by those hunting new values.

This search for new values was especially obvious among the architects. As one of the more prominent of these graduates of the Beaux-Arts, Robert Mallet-Stevens, reminded his fellow craftsmen, modern engineering simplified construction. Buildings stood up on fewer points of support than used to be the case. In their designs, architects should take full advantage of this fact. While Le Corbusier remarked that higher buildings would permit wider streets, it was in the country that modern French architects were more at their ease. Outside the city, these artists, Michel Roux-Spiez, the chief architect of the government, among them, gave



freer play to their talent. In the city, modernism was often in disturbing contrast with older buildings, and however startling such contrasts may be, they lack elegance, for elegance means harmonizing conflicting interests. In painting this was done in France, but Jean Gabriel Domergue had a fight on his hands.

This "bearded imp of Satan," as one of his enemies called him, referring less to him than to his successful way of painting, was born in Bordeaux on March fourth, 1889. A Gascon, of a well-to-do family, to whom the law and medicine were the surer professional ways of making money, Jean Gabriel ran away at fifteen with only a few francs in his pocket. Why? Because he wanted to paint and his family was opposed. When told that her son had gone into politics, Raymond Poincaré's mother exclaimed, "But that is no career for a young man!"

The youthful Domergue's family felt the same way about painting. But Jean Gabriel persisted. Soon he was making money. Like the American caricaturist, Ralph Barton, at sixteen he was earning a living by drawing for the Paris papers and satirical reviews, supplying the pictures he drew with amusing captions, an important point. To Parisians the breath of life is a sharp comment, briefly stated, and at this sort of thing, like the playwright, Tristan Bernard, and many other typical Parisians, Domergue excelled.

His opponents noted this fact and let him alone for a while.

They began again when he grew a beard in 1912. What was behind it, they inquired, only to find that he had won the Prix de Rome, after winning twenty-seven other prizes before he was twenty. Offered by the government's art school, the Ecole des Beaux Arts, the Prix de Rome represents the last word in official approval of a student. Moreover, to go to the painters' section of the Beaux Arts you did not have to have the usual academic degrees.

All you did there was paint and listen to the criticisms of your companions, often very much to the point. Once a week an established painter came to tell you how he would have done it if he

had been in your place, a contribution to knowledge never unanimously cheered. But life there had its compensations: the Bal des Quatz' Arts, for example, given once a year by the painters and architects. With the exception of the dance held yearly by the medical students, the Quatz' Arts was the wildest show in Paris. But it had nothing to do with winning the Prix de Rome. If a student won this award, the government sent him to the Italian capital for three years to continue his studies. When he won this prize, however, Domergue ran true to form. Instead of three years, he stayed only six months among the saintly.

"I was earning more money in Paris," he explained to me in his marble-floored apartment next to the American Ambassador's residence in Paris, "so I resigned and came home. No artist ever amounts to much who doesn't deal with his own country and his own time." With about one hundred dollars to his (and her) name, he married Odette Maugendre, the sculptor, poor like himself, "but sympathetic, interested in what I was trying to do." Together they grew rich. Their villa at Cannes was a show place, but it was not until 1928 that Domergue began making what was called "big money."

"It's hardly worth while marrying him," doctors told his wife. "He won't live three months." But with wealth came health, so he had no reason to complain.

It was others who complained.

"Why?" I asked the famous dealer in pictures, Ambroise Volard, who died in 1939.

"The trouble is," he answered, "Domergue's as persuasive as the devil. If he gives the public what it wants, he does so in his own way. On the other hand, if he wanted to, he could do what others do and in the way they do it, for he knows his *métier* thoroughly. But he prefers his own style. Naturally, those whose style has been less successful resent his great success, a success he has attained in the classic manner. That portrait for which Lucette Desmoulins posed, for example.

"It has the life, the grace of a Greek statue, and color besides! His subject? Always the same one, beauty, exemplified by modern women.

"All that was admired in the past he has revived in modern form, showing the women of today how to make the most of themselves. But he does not exaggerate, employ eccentric means. In his work there is a pervasive harmony. In it you sense that all that was once admired in the past has survived, for his women have the slim, strong legs of the Greeks, lovely bosoms! And there is always a chic turn to the head. Too thin? His women! Well, then, so is Greta Garbo. Ah, it's a friend of yours who says that. Well, I have friends who thought Renoir's women were too fat."

He sighed, then added slyly, "Of course, the real trouble with Domergue is, he sells his own pictures. This brings him into conflict with the dealers."

This retired merchant was under no illusions as to the way what he called "demand" was stimulated in what he described as "the art game."

"It is a racket," he admitted. "Even though Voltaire couldn't see why, dealers have to live. How do they do it? Well, they start whispering in willing ears what seems to them worth whispering. Then things happen. Only recently the 'ah, boys!' and the 'oh, girls!' rushed to a certain gallery, catching their breath in a chorus. What for? To announce a discovery, a painter of 'intimate' scenes, unexciting, perhaps, but competently done, and, in any case, done by a man we had all known of for years and approved, at least moderately. But the price of his work had to be sent up a ladder.

"The supply from established painters was running low. Besides, the Renoirs, the Manets, Monets, Degas, and so on, bring prices beyond anyone but a millionaire."

It was Vollard who discovered the Impressionists, selling them in his two-by-four shop on the Rue Laffitte in Paris.

There Domergue appeared one day to ask if it was true that

Renoir's hands were crippled. Learning it was, he paused to study some Cézannes. As Camille Mauclair, the critic, has more than once pointed out, Cézanne's work was uneven, but by using cylinders, spheres and cones, he did get depth into painting, technically an interesting and valuable accomplishment. "But is this all the public wants?" Domergue asked.

"It will always want your specialty, beautiful women," Vollard answered. "And these women he has stylized," Vollard told me. "At the same time, he has observed closely, modifying what he sees according to his idea of the interpretation an artist should give the actual. As you know, Domergue believes that artists are best only when they interpret their own time and their own country. Interpreted clearly, pleasingly and uniquely, the actual lives on. But though he has captivated the public, this is not all the truth about Domergue."

The truth is, Domergue had had little competition. Standards among painters were far lower in France than among writers, and as the American critic, Willard Huntington Wright, once recalled in a lecture that provoked a minor riot, "I am going to make a fair comparison. Americans are mad about the short story. It is their favorite art form. Well, if the average American story writer knew as little about his business as most French painters do, he would starve."

This savant, better known for the mysteries written under the name of S. S. Van Dine, was recognized as an authority on painting in Europe as well as America, but even French authorities, like the professor and lecturer, Auguste V. Desclos, had a tendency to deal more with the immediate past, with Gauguin and Van Gogh, than the present. For this there was a reason that only poseurs and snobs deny. Among landscape painters, for instance, who have the French had since 1918 except Marquet? Strong, honest, he set a pace, but only Maurice Vlaminck kept to it. When he hit a line, or put on a color, he meant it. But the others? True enough, Raoul Dufy and Utrillo had a gracious color sense, but neither they nor Othon Friez,

Roland Oudot, or Pierre Bonnard organized any canvas with the authority that marked their predecessors' expression. Eccentric short cuts, such as George Braque took, there were in plenty, of course. Even Henri Matisse took them, spotting color deliciously, but he left spectators with the feeling that his exaggerations were out of scale. Too often he failed to tuck them into his composition, letting them go their own way like rebellious children.

This fault I once heard criticized in a gallery. That afternoon a woman well known in Paris for the fact that she was "smart in a way typically Parisian"—that is, everything she wore harmonized with her frock—was standing before a Matisse canvas. "Would you wear a dress designed like that?" she asked the actress, Cecile Sorel. Always tactful, the Doyenne—in other words, the actress first in rank at the Comédie Française—walked on to one of Marie Laurencin's delicately tinted outlines. "At least *she* has style," the star of French classic tragedy remarked then. So had André Derain.

He could draw. At the same time there were sharp edges to his work, cramped lines never eased out in the manner of Van Dongen. A disciple of Brueghel, the great Dutch contemporary of Rubens, Kees Van Dongen was successful in France both with the discriminating and the crowd as no one except Domergue was, but he certainly enlarged the dimensions used by his great master. Reducing the size of Van Dongen's portrait of the American, E. Berry Wall, by looking at it through the wrong end of an opera glass, a spectator remarked that the picture gained in intensity.

This trick did not work with Bernard Boutet de Monville's portraits. In these a quick turn was given to values that tended to get out of hand. In the way they were smoothed into the final effect there was an obvious manliness.

The present, what he saw around him, affected this artist like a cocktail, for, as Domergue remarked to me, "We learn from the past *how*, not *what* to paint. What we imagine the past was is vague compared to what kicks our chin in the present. Compared to the present, the past's like water. There's no punch in it."

"As you say, traditions have their value, but perhaps, like Valéry, you believe that 'traditions and progress are the two great enemies of human kind.' So what of progress, what of the future?"

"What do we know about the future?" Domergue replied. "Have a drink, and spare me Valéry! Any artist who refuses to learn from the past takes the long road, not the straight one, but no artist has ever survived who did not express his own time and country. However, he doesn't have to be blatant about it. Take Corot as an example. How surely and quickly—that is to say, how wittily—he related effects, and yet how harmoniously. In Corot nothing shocks. No wonder he has been imitated! Vollard used to say that 'Corot painted only three thousand pictures, of which six thousand were in America,' where they are buying moderns now.

"The trouble with these moderns is, they are hipped on themselves. Trying to escape the present, they keep reminding us that they're unhappy. As if that mattered! What matters is the quality, the essential in what forms all of us. Reveal that wittily, with elegance, and you are made, whether you do it as Guitry does on the stage, or briefly, as Sennep does."

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# V

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## Shows and Sacha Guitry

THE value to society of great caricaturists like Sennep in France, and in America Ralph Barton, was their ability to show up what was exaggerated, and hence unbalanced, in the passing show, and so restore a sense of the normal, reinstate the stable with its reassuring implications. That they did this with so few strokes of the pen intensified their effect.

"You get the idea at once," Barton reminded Boutet de Monville, adding maliciously, "that's the advantage that cartoonists have over painters." But painters, using color, as Monville knew, lead more elegantly, if less wittily, into their ultimate meaning, and so avoid a disturbing emphasis, a fault Sennep had to fight. As he matured, he did so more and more successfully, but his real success was due to the fact that he dealt amusingly and intelligently with "his own time and country," to quote Domergue again. Besides Sennep in 1939, and important for the same reason, were other caricaturists, among them Ralph Soupault, Vertès, Roger Roy and Elkins.

The work that such men did was assembled yearly in the Salon des Humoristes where the caricatured occasionally gave sensational vent to their feelings. Less productive of excitement were the more stolid art shows, the Salons given in the spring and autumn. At the Autumn Salon a place was assigned to every art, for everything that men and women did in France tended to become an art, from dressmaking to cooking. Possibly this was because the French were

vain. Jealous even of the past, they tried to improve on it frequently, though the wiser among them tended to adapt, rather than change, what they learned from the treasures of art stored in the capital foreigners called Paris and the French themselves described as Paname.

This tendency to use nicknames, the slang called "argot," characterized those small theaters where caricature was developed in song and talk. But caricature has its limits.

It is too brief to be completely effective, so in the larger theaters and especially the cinemas, the attack on opinion was often massed and simplified to a point where even a child could understand it. Subtlety had less place there than in writing, painting, sculpture and music. But all these arts were made to serve the theater's purpose. Competent showmen saw to that.

These producers can be divided into several groups.

The more modern among them controlled what was called the *théâtre d'avant-garde*, or *théâtre du cartel*. In this clan in 1939 were Louis Jouvet, Charles Dullin, Gaston Baty, and René Rocher. George and Ludmilla Pitoëff belonged in this group, too, though they were Russians. Artistically, however, no great gap separated them from the "masters" of the so-called *théâtres des Boulevards*, where Sacha Guitry, actor and playwright, and that fighter of duels, the playwright Henry Bernstein, ruled. Amusing, witty, what is called "very Parisian," these commercial theaters drew the crowd, though after the playwright, Edouard Bourdet, took over the direction of the government theater, the Comédie Française, it became the "smart thing" to go there.

It was Bourdet who drafted directors from the "cartel," and had Jouvet, Dullin, Baty, and Jacques Copeau put on classic revivals, such as Rostand's *Cyrano de Bergerac*.

This policy met with success. But it was never at the Comédie that modern authors had a first hearing, so theater lovers went elsewhere to see such notable productions as those of Paul Claudel, Jean Giraudoux, François Mauriac, Jacques Deval, Jean Sarment



and Bourdet himself. As for Bourdet, his plays, pieces like *La Prisonnière*, *Le Sexe Faible* and *La Fleur du Pois*, represent a satisfied, middle-class man's intelligent, but often brutal, examination even of what is abnormal. After him, Claudel is a relief.

This venerated former ambassador not only flees life, he is what psychologists describe by a long name, and others call "a throw back." His *L'Annonce Faite à Marie* and *L'Otage*, show this. But while the public applauded his biblical speech, his resurrection of the past, it was more intrigued by the present.

This Mauriac faced squarely, but he made no attempt to conceal his disgust. To Mauriac what men are is the contrary of what they should be, so they have to be made to behave. To the acute distress with which this conflict inspired him he gave dramatic expression in plays like *Asmodée*. Unlike Mauriac, Deval accepted life on its own terms. As *Tovarich* showed, he liked romance as much as Sarment did, but he could also be realistic as in his *Made-moiselle*.

These plays pleased the public, but, Guitry aside, no one captivated Parisians so completely as Jean Giraudoux did.

A diplomat from the green valley of the Creuse in the center of France, Giraudoux was put in charge of French propaganda in 1939. By then he had risen in the French diplomatic service to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary. But early in his career he had already made his mark as a novelist, etching Poincaré sharply in *Bella* and Briand in *Combat Avec L'Ange*.

His studies of La Fontaine, Racine and Choderlos de Laclos were well known. In the theater, smart society found him what the Duchess de Noailles called "charming, witty, full of humor and fantasy." But whatever so-called society may have thought, a larger public failed to sense that Giraudoux's revival of old legends was one long, terrifying tragedy, deftly rendered by a sensitive man, at heart a poet. What hope does he hold out? None! In *Judith* he illustrates the ravages of love, describing that much admired passion as no more than a net God throws around men to enslave

them. In *Intermezzo*, supposed to be a comedy, he shows a young girl from his own part of France, the Limousin, in love with a specter, an incorporeal incorporation of an ideal. But is this, in its essentials, amusing? I cannot see that it is.

It is idealism, he remarks, that is charming in girls. But they marry not ideals, but men. Disillusioned by marriage, by contact, they lose their power over others. Having established this much, Giraudoux goes on, illustrating, in his *The Trojan War Will Not Take Place*, the old prayer, "From pestilence, famine, and war, O God, deliver us!" No one wanted that war, but men could not master the stupidities that made it inevitable. "Only too true," Parisians sighed, and flocked to see this author's study of fanaticism, *Electra*, and his *Ondine*. In *Ondine* a water sprite brings a chevalier a love so demanding that he is unhappy. Moved by her love of purity, truth and justice, Electra inspires her brother, Orestes, to murder their mother, Clytemnestra, of whose conduct Electra disapproves. Because of this fanatical attitude, Electra brings ruin on everyone, disaster to her country, but she sticks to her point. When all is lost she is asked what she has left.

"Justice!" she exclaims. Justice has been done, she answers, and that "is everything."

All these themes are treated deftly, relieved by a humor that makes many forget their tragic import. Unquestionably, from his *Siegfried*, a study of the conflict between France and Germany, and his *Amphitryon* 38, a treatment of fidelity and marital love, to *Ondine*, Giraudoux set an enviable standard, a standard so high that others have suffered by comparison. To this rule, however, there was at least one exception, Sacha Guitry. But then, Sacha Guitry was an exception to every rule in France.

He was Sacha. Son of the famous actor, Lucien Guitry, and his wife, born Emmas de Pontgest, Alexandre Pierre Georges Guitry was born February twenty-first, 1885, in Moscow, where his father was appearing at the Imperial Theater. Educating this young man, who early in life took the name of Sacha, proved a problem. Des-

tinged to write more than one hundred plays, direct several theaters, produce successful films when others were failing, and write "enchanted biographies," he resisted official brain-cramming with skill and determination.

He was to break away at sixteen, after attending a dozen schools, break away and get a play produced, drawing from his father the unwilling tribute that his son had "an almost inhuman feeling for theatrical effects."

"Something you don't find in books," Sacha reminded "the old one"; adding, "After all, 'the play's the thing,' if it goes."

His went and at such a pace that year after year at his theater there were "Standing Room Only" signs. Everything he touched succeeded.

He was like no one else.

"An original," people called him because he was always natural. If a man was a fool, he said so with an engaging frankness peculiar to his genius, "surprising a lot of fools. They didn't like it." So they advertised Sacha, explaining what was "wrong with him."

"Well, what is?" an attractive young actress once asked me.

"I can't see," she went on. "Of course, he's different with women. If a woman is lovely, he goes into details about it. And what details! At first it is very alarming, but he does it so charmingly," she sighed. "Very charmingly," she added, reminiscently but emphatically, thinking, she told me, "of details."

These details he got onto the stage despite all the rules, or at least he hinted at them and with an arousing candor. Women liked this. Crowding his theaters, they made his matinées famous, but his appeal was to men as well. As the Russian Ambassador, Isvol-sky, remarked to me once, "It is to all civilized persons." So in France it paid. Growing rich, Sacha began to marry, uniting his destiny (temporarily) in 1908 to that of the actress, Charlotte Lysès.

"Such genius as yours should be continued," a friend said, congratulating him.



*Pictures, Inc.*

The playwright and actor, Sacha Guitry, and his young wife, his fourth,  
the former Geneviève de Serreville.



"In my plays, you mean? It will be," Sacha countered.

It was, but Sacha had no children, "only guests," he explained, referring to dinners at his town house, rich with his collections of works of art and rare books, and to week ends at his château, where he proved so popular that he finally placed a printed notice in every guestroom, reading, "Those who have been asked to stay from Saturday to Monday are invited not to prolong their stay beyond Wednesday evening." Such extended visits interrupted his work, and "after all," he said, "masterpieces have a right to be born," and a man to change his mind, he might have added, for, after his fourth marriage, he was to tell the journalist, Pierre Lazareff, "that men who change their women too often, like those who never change them, don't really love women."

He went on to explain this by saying that "it must be terrible to see a woman one loves grow old."

This is a terror he apparently sought to escape by marrying in succession, after his first adventure, three very different women. Relatively unknown when he met her, Yvonne Printemps became Sacha's leading lady, then starred in his plays with him.

She was as blonde as his next wife, the more youthful Jacqueline Delubac, was brunette. Finally, in 1939, Sacha married, to quote from a newspaper account, "the divinely blue-eyed, neither blonde nor brunette society debutante, Geneviève de Serreville," and this time he married in church. "Let us pray God, for good," his friend, Tristan Bernard, remarked.

The bridegroom's public, like his private, career reached a climax the same summer, for it was in 1939 that Sacha was elected to the Académie Goncourt, an election that put an end to the notion that no one took him seriously but himself, and that he took nothing else seriously. As a matter of fact, it was not the first time that he had been proposed for high honors. Already such *grands seigneurs* of French letters as Abel Bonnard, André Bellessort and George Lecomte had mentioned Sacha for the French Academy, but the objection had been made that "this smiling and happy man" was

"worse than a playwright, an actor." Here was an old objection.

It is that of the writer who confines himself to a single medium and so intensifies emphasis. Where the novelist makes his stage directions and conversation all part of the printed page, stimulating the reader's imagination by the art of writing alone, the playwright calls on scenic designers and actors to illustrate his effects. These various appeals fight among themselves, distract the attention, spread it, impeding imagination, which is stronger than illustration. Furthermore, as he does not work alone, the playwright cannot claim full credit. But of the criticism that this fact has provoked for centuries André Bellessort took what was described benignly as "the larger view."

He retorted that however much of a "patchwork the play and the opera" were, the fact remained that "after religion the theater was the most powerful agent known" for bringing men together in a happy communion, for persuading them to co-operate in establishing sanely conceived standards of life. With this in mind, the heirs of the fortune of Edmond de Goncourt chose Sacha despite an opposition widely expressed, in accordance with the French contention that an election of this sort concerns not only academies but the public.

This opposition grew partially out of the belief that Sacha thought too well of himself. In his playful way, this actor-playwright had done more than a bit to strengthen this notion, though many of his obviously exaggerated sayings "were good for no more than a laugh," the caricaturist, Sem, once said to Ralph Barton who answered that "Sacha likes to 'kid' the public as Will Rogers does, and the public likes his 'kidding.'" But however much favor Sacha's mocking found with the public and such similiar spirits as Barton and Sem, his opponents stuck to their point.

They insisted that Guitry was no more than "a self-centered egoist" who had heeded Paul Valéry's injunction, "to express only yourself" and disregard "traditions that do not know how to die and progress that cannot live." By this last Valéry apparently

meant that what science says today it denies tomorrow. At one time it "proved" that the world was flat, later that it was round, and then came Einstein. But it is not with scientists of this sort that Sacha Guitry was concerned.

It was with men of another kind, with men who knew how to live agreeably, gallantly, according to rules never disproved, it was with such men, "and, thank Heaven, such women, that Sacha has occupied himself," the American actor and playwright, Leo Ditrichstein, once told me. Of this devotion to an admired past the Académie Goncourt took cognizance in electing Guitry, as one of its members made clear. Receiving the press after Sacha's election, René Benjamin, well known not only as a writer but as a lecturer, explained that the origins of the anti-Sacha clique were rooted in the envy of lesser for greater men, and that no one admired great men more than Sacha Guitry did.

"The popular press raves against him," Benjamin went on, "because it sees in him an avowed enemy. Sacha is an aristocrat." Quite, but that was not the point! "What is dangerous about Guitry," a French publisher told me, "is the fact that he laughs at what we have to pretend to believe in in order to get circulation, and he has done this in that most popular of all mediums, the theater, but so deftly we can't get at him. We have to attack him by telling mean stories about him."

The fact is, Guitry did on a larger scale what Domergue did, throwing into relief a prevailing heaviness, "a tendency on the part of some of the French to take themselves too seriously, to think nothing mattered that did not advertise," to quote Camille Aymard, the publicist involved in the Stavisky scandal and then acquitted.

This gift for turning the laugh on the pompous, for doing what caricaturists did with their drawings or by talking and singing in the smaller theaters, Sacha intensified by making motion pictures, and there he dealt with history. Dealing with history, his effect was political. But his touch was so light that at first politicians did not



suspect what he really meant, so it remained for Leon Daudet, another member of the Goncourt Academy, to make entirely, inescapably clear what Guitry only hinted. As well known as the time of day was the fact that Daudet and Guitry were friends. In view of their characters, they could not have been if they had not thought alike, and what Daudet thought about history was well known.

He saw French history as a painful tumble down hill from the days of the monarchy, and the plain, unvarnished facts tend to support his conclusion. With "a great price" the French purchased their freedom, and Daudet pointed this out in unmeasured terms. Naturally, this aroused opposition. As the French humorist, Clement Vautel, was kind enough to explain, "No one *really* likes to be called an ape," and with Daudet "ape" and "gorilla" were almost terms of endearment. When he went to the stove and warmed up his subject, he—well, he warmed up his subject, literally serving his opponents for breakfast in his morning newspaper article, a habit to which they took exception. So they fought him, lessening his influence. Where Guitry slipped by with his subtle references, Daudet was called into court. Sent to jail "for defending," as he said, his fifteen-year-old son, killed under mysterious circumstances, he made a sensational escape from the Santé Prison in Paris—one that both amused and delighted the French—and went into exile. In Belgium he continued writing, however, getting his articles through to Paris despite the authorities.

A great journalist, perhaps the ablest of his generation, he continued to serve a series of hot cakes, full of the plums of invective. But the proof of this pudding was elsewhere. As those arbiters of elegance, the French, knew, it was in Jacques Bainville's *History of France*.

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# VI

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## Bainville and History

THE importance of Jacques Bainville was variously estimated in France. Though his eminence, his far-reaching effect on the French, was admitted by everyone who mattered, it was accounted for differently. To Royalists he was great because he helped Maurras restore the idea of monarchy. To historians his value lay in the smooth clarity with which he established his explanation of why those who ruled France did one thing rather than another. But while all this was important, his prime distinction was elsewhere.

The world will remember Bainville because of his constant recognition of a principle that concerns everyone, not only the French. Implicit in everything he wrote, it can be stated in simpler terms.

It is an acknowledgment of the fact that what makes life worth living is civilization, and that no civilization can flourish or even survive unless its defense is made a first consideration. Defense comes first, not second, third or last! Every great governor of men, every successful government that ever created prosperity, has kept this principle continually in mind.

There are two reasons why they have done so. Equal in importance, one is external in origin, the other internal. *Externally*: if a country in which a civilization has its being is rich, or important strategically, it invites attack. When there is food or safety, in a stable, the human herd will charge for it, and if the defense of a country that is well stocked or located at a vital intersection, if the

defense of such a country from foreign attack is badly conceived or managed, then the whole strength of its people may well be absorbed in the business of warding off assault. *Internally*: if its internal economy is ill directed, or the country is poor, the effect is the same. Here the force of a nation's workers is exhausted simply by the task of eking out a living. In both cases energy is used up entirely by problems that are immediate and that cannot be escaped.

Nothing is left over.

Nothing remains that is capable of creating what we call civilization, and what we mean by civilization is a balanced and orderly distribution of activities, a co-operation among men designed to create all those values that are of use to men. In order that these may be created, each of us must do that which he is fitted to do, for some men are meant to be soldiers, others businessmen, scientists or artists, still others lawyers, doctors and dentists, as we all have painful reason to know, and others, happily, farmers or men meant to work with their hands. If all these are forced into business in an undue search for profit, or into the army because the defense of a country has been badly conceived, then there is unhappiness. Men do not like to do what they are not fitted to do. If the activities of which men are capable are to result in those diversified creations that make a full life possible and worth while, they must do so under favorable conditions. To such conditions both war and famine put an end.

This makes defense against both war and famine a first consideration, for, if it is not made a first consideration, defense is forced on everyone in the end. But defense presents a variety of problems. What kind of defense is best? Internationalism, or Nationalism? Internationalism was tried by Rome, and broke up. Leaving its imprint on France, it recovered under the leadership of the Roman Catholic Church, only to come to an end with the revolt known as the Reformation, a revolt sustained in France by Voltaire, Diderot and Rousseau, who saw in Austria, the temporal ally of the Roman Church, an enemy to be weakened. Weakened it was

when Napoleon, in his turn, attempted to impose his authority everywhere, only to have the "wicked" combine against him and bury him at Saint Helena. What Napoleon could not do, the Germans attempted, only to have their power broken in 1918 when the American President, Woodrow Wilson, helped create a Protestant overlordship known as the League of Nations. Like Lenin's attempt to establish the world rule of the proletariat, this came to nothing. Why is obvious.

It is obvious that men are hopelessly prejudiced in favor of their own way of boiling an egg. To others the Wilsons and the Lenins, despite coy attempts to introduce them as unselfish men, remain first of all foreigners, hence presumably rascals, for an idea difficult to drill into a tough French head is the notion that an American or a Russian is likely to put French interests first. Like other peoples, the French concluded that Wilson and Lenin were human, too, and so inclined to put first the interests of Wilson and Lenin. That a majority throughout the world would reach a conclusion like this was to be foreseen.

It was to be foreseen that Nationalism would revive, and revive it did under Mussolini in Italy, Stalin in Russia, Hitler in Germany, and finally, under Daladier, in France. Such revivals, however, were nothing new in France.

They had gone on since Caesar's time. If Caesar found the Gauls quarreling among themselves, they united to fight him, and his rule endured only because it was beneficent and left room for the personal liberty that the French believed in. Whenever this liberty was unduly interfered with, there was always civil war in France. But whenever a foreign invader appeared, the French, in the end, always united again, as they did so dramatically when Jeanne d'Arc called on them to strengthen the King's hand and throw the invader out of France.

They were to unite again when Henry of Navarre came to the throne of France.

This King preserved personal liberty, guaranteeing the Pro-

testants their rights by what was known as the Edict of Nantes. Building up a great prosperity, the Kings were occupied from now on with keeping the enemy out of France. To be sure, in doing this they concentrated everything on defense, and this meant restricting personal liberty. But that is not the point.

The point is, by freeing France from invasion they built up to a height justly described as magnificent the well-being of the French, for only under the Kings did France maintain a commanding position. Whenever the King's power was weakened, history shows, France lost stature, so what interested the French in 1939 was learning how the Kings maintained this freedom from invasion that made for prosperity. Could it be done without sacrificing personal liberty? Unquestionably, the Kings had invaded individual freedom, and to such a degree that Rousseau was given a hearing.

This led to the French Revolution, but the Revolution was something more than a spontaneous outburst. It was carefully nursed to life by men who took advantage of all Rousseau had taught in order to further their own selfish interest. When Louis XIV died, their chance came, for the weaknesses of monarchy are regencies and minorities, and when the old King died, his heir, Louis XV, was only five years old, so the Regent, the Duc d'Orleans, schemed and worked to maintain his own power and lessen that of the King. Well, why not, many have asked, and the question is a fair one.

The answer to it explains the hold that the monarchy had for years on the French people, for what made the Kings powerful? Obviously, the people, and the reason they made the King powerful was because the King's interest and theirs coincided. Theoretically, France belonged to the King, so it was to his interest to keep the French strong and well. If they weakened, he did. If they fell sick, so did he, and this was sure to affect not only the King's life, but his future, his children. Maintaining national welfare, however, is a very difficult business, and beyond the ability of a five-

year-old boy, so the Regent of Orleans, who represented special interests, the privileged classes—that small portion of the French people whom Louis XV tried, later on, to tax—was able to further their purposes at the expense of the King, and so at the expense of the French as a whole, during the King's minority. In this he was aided by the English to whom the power of the French Monarchy represented a constant danger that they were anxious to do away with, or at least lessen.

This they attempted by helping set up in France secret societies opposed to the King. Bainville makes clear the part these societies, and their members, the Free Masons, played in all this, but it was only one of many battles that the Masons fought with their international rival, the Roman Catholic Church. Bainville makes this clear, but what Bainville does not make so clear is the role that women played in reversing the established order.

This question Taine treats. As he says, disorder ensued when Rome fell, but Charlemagne restored discipline. After him, however, the country broke up into small units, with minor barons defending the peasantry. But these barons were too weak to ward off major invasions. Persuading the barons to combine, the priests helped establish a King, and even revolutionary writers, from Thomas E. Watson in America to Edouard Herriot in France, praise what the Kings did.

They restored order, the order that permits quality to come to the top, and freed France from the invader. But their power fell into weak hands. Fenelon taught Louis XVI to be considerate rather than strong, and it took a Napoleon finally to revive the authority of the state.

This reconstruction the women who mattered in France approved. In the Kings' time, the aristocrats had been reduced by royalty to so minor a role that they became courtiers rather than warriors. Inevitably, this affected the women at court. As it happened, it condemned them to death in the end. But for the moment they ruled society because the men were weak. Rich, thanks to

successful royal rule, but neglected in every real sense of the term, they inaugurated a reign of frivolity. Because they were not happy in their own life, they became playwrights, producers of amateur plays. As actresses they could be what they dreamed of being. But plays, like games, grew each year more wild. Blind man's buff led to chance encounters, to pastimes that provoked protest, not from enraged husbands but from women who paused finally to wonder who their child's father might be. In the end, these women sickened of this carnival.

They were charming and lovely women, according to the stories told of them by contemporary historians, but the gatherings of society came to mean nothing to them.

These gatherings were nothing more than an exchange of opinion about what did not matter. Compliments no longer meant much, however deftly stated—and they were deft, it appears—because they were paid women by men whom women neither respected nor feared. Having fed so long on bon-bons, women began to long for meat and wine. As Guitry has made evident, women have mattered in France because they have not tried to be men. But they always expected men to be men! Taine put it otherwise. Discussing the old days, *l'ancien régime*, he said that "the ladies of France" began to demand "*la chaleur communicative d'un sentiment fort*," the stimulating warmth of strong feeling.

A famous woman put it more bluntly. "If a man takes me," she complained, "I expect him to look out for me afterward."

This was said during the reign of Louis XVI. Taught by Fenelon, if he was weak, the King at least was kindly, and everyone, from the Dauphin—the French name for the Crown Prince—and his wife, to the women of the aristocracy—everyone was busy doing good to the poor, and weeping over unhappiness, and incidentally over the sentiments expressed in the books of Rousseau. By now French women were prepared to take Rousseau's advice, to welcome the consequences of pleasure, to delight in children. However he may have behaved himself, Rousseau had taught them this with

his plea for a return to Nature with a capital "N." Because he gave them a thrill, they had welcomed him into their salons, though he was an awkward man. But they had no comprehension of his political ideas. Discussing them gaily before butlers and footmen, they transmitted them to the kitchen, and from the kitchen they found their way to the street. As Madame Roland realized, these society women were fools. Why should they sit on the thrones of the mighty? she asked, adding significantly enough, that their men were not men. When the Revolutionists came to arrest them, no Revolutionist had his head smashed. Polite to the last, the aristocrats went to the scaffold gaily and bravely, dying like ladies and gentlemen, yielding their place as arbiters of elegance in France to women who were women rather than dolls, and to men who were men.

It is obvious from the record that the women who mattered in France preferred men to gentlemen, and they got one in Napoleon. Where Louis XVI had refused to allow his troops to shoot because there were women in the crowd, Napoleon fired, careless whether or not he brought down women as well as men. Probably he knew that the mob that forced the King and Queen to return from Versailles to Paris, several years before, had in it many men dressed as women by Choderlos de Laclos, the writer and plotter of rebellion in the service of the Duc d'Orleans. But even if the crowd Napoleon shot at had been made up entirely of women, this would not have deterred him, the future Emperor admitted, and the event proved he was right.

A few days after he shot down four hundred rioters in the Rue Saint Honoré in Paris, by thousands the Parisians, men and women, turned out to cheer him. Democracy had already gone out of fashion. People wanted order, not disorder, to be led rather than to try to lead themselves.

This fact explains the Revolution, Bainville contends, showing that it was a revolt engineered principally by the Free Masons. But it was a revolt against the weakness of Louis XVI, against



the lack of authority rather than the authority the royal regime was supposed to represent. Granting wide room for argument, the fact remains that the younger writers were following Bainville's lead in 1939 rather than that of Taine and Michelet, who denounced, instead of proving. That Bainville did not do this accounts for the chorus of praise that greeted his *History of France* when it was published in 1924, and for his election to the French Academy. But the approval accorded him by experts does not explain the wide sale of his history and of his other books.

This sale was due to those arbiters of elegance who make up the French public. Where once they had been relatively few, they had been increased in number by the Revolution and made powerful by the vote. In the meantime, they had grown up. Where once they demanded fancies, now they asked for facts, and these Bainville fed them. Summing up their opinion, Maurice Donnay, distinguished, elderly playwright, cited Raymond Poincaré. "Poincaré has the highest esteem for you," Donnay wrote Bainville. "Probably he envies you your right as a newspaperman to tell the French truths that he has not been able to tell them in the place he has occupied." Reminding him of this, I once asked Poincaré about Bainville.

"Like Maurras he sees clearly," the President answered, "but unlike Maurras and Daudet, he does not provoke controversy. This is an advantage, and a king has the same advantage, as the English know. He is above party. In the world of thought Bainville is above dispute. You will see, he will become a criterion."

This Albert Thibaudet, famous critic and a Republican, also predicted, remarking to a friend of mine that "Bainville has dated Michelet and Aulard," meaning that their conclusions were no longer valid. Than these two, Bainville had more documents in his possession. They came to light in his time. But he had a special quality, too. This André Rousseaux, Thibaudet's successor as an arbiter, explained by saying that Bainville not only told precisely *what* happened, but *why* men in the past had done one

thing rather than another, and Bainville did this so exactly that it was difficult to avoid his conclusions. In doing this, moreover, he lived up to the best traditions of historical writing in France. But if he owed the past a debt, the past owed him one as well, for he lent an increased authority to the findings of historians like Guizot, de Tocqueville, Fustel de Coulanges and the de Goncourts. At the same time he strengthened the writings of men like Mortimer Ternaux, Franz Funck-Brentano, Albert Mathiez, and the Academician who wrote under the name of G. Lenotre.

The heritage Bainville left to the younger men is perhaps even more significant. Dying of cancer at fifty-two, in 1936, Bainville left the way clear for others to write fact rather than fancy, and this his successors have done. Because of him, it has been easier to do. Bainville accustomed the public to the truth. If *The French Revolution* of Pierre Gaxotte was studied, if the works of Daniel Halévy, Lucas-Dubreton and Constantin-Weyer were praised, if Bernard Faÿ was listened to more and more, it was due not only to their own acknowledged ability, but to the impetus Bainville gave to the search for facts and the skill with which he, like André Siegfried, carved facts free of misunderstanding. But facts are not everything.

There is a law that explains them, and this law shows that nations rise and fall as the birth rate falls and rises. In France there had been a rising birth rate only when there was rule from above. Among the personalities that affected opinion profoundly in France, only Maurras drove this truth home in specific terms. But this is a detail. What matters is the fact that these artists all agreed to an essential.

They agreed that what is worth doing is worth doing well, and this agreement affected public opinion. Interested in every form of art, people in France kept asking themselves why interpreters such as Guitry, workers in the plastic arts such as Despiau and Domergue, and poets and writers such as Valéry were successful.

The answer was inescapable. Obviously, these artists were successful because they believed in government from above. Not one of them would allow a jury, a convocation of parties, to decide what they should do. Experts in their line, each one ran his own affair. Well, why not have experts in government? After all, able governors of men are artists, too, but to get results they must have power.

This power the people gave Daladier. Called on to decide between the politicians' plea for government from below and the artists' plea for government from above, those arbiters of elegance who mattered most in France showed again and again after 1914 that they preferred government from above. True enough, the politicians jockeyed dictator after dictator out of power. Joffre went, and Clemenceau, then Poincaré, Doumergue and Laval. But these reversals were only temporary. Despite the victory of the demagogues in 1936, the men and women who counted pushed Daladier back into power, and, when Daladier came in, he came in with the army.

This fact was of the very first significance. As Bainville has shown, French civilization had flourished only when its defense had been made a first consideration, and the army's sole concern was the defense of France as a whole.

This was not the case with a majority of the politicians. Until it was too late, until war was upon them again in 1939, what mattered most to them was their own or their party's success, as Tardieu, and long before him Maurras, made tragically, inescapably clear. Rather than risk losing an election in May, 1936, they let Hitler march into the Rhineland. "But if they had opposed Hitler then and stopped short his march to power, why would they have risked losing the election that was held two months later?" I once asked a Radical Socialist politician.

He answered me by saying, "We had taught the people that there was no real danger of war, and, after all, Hitler was only sending troops into German territory. What he did, of course,

was contrary to the Versailles Treaty. But the Rhineland was German, and if we had threatened to use force we would have been accused of risking a war, and the people would have turned against us and refused to vote for us.

"It was our own fault, as Tardieu—damn him!—keeps reminding us," he added sadly. "We misled the people, and now they, and we, have to take the rap."

This was in 1939.

The politicians who did this avoided war in 1936. But only temporarily, and at what a cost! Austria, then Czecho-Slovakia, then Poland! With France at war, the French began checking up on the reasons for this disaster. Everywhere in the newspapers and among people with whom you talked, you came on the same explanation. War was against the general interest of the French. By giving in to Hitler in 1936, the politicians had appeared to be in favor of peace. So they had won the elections. But they had done more than this. In giving Hitler his head, they had made war inevitable later. So they had sacrificed the general interest of the French to the interest of a party, of a part of the French people, that part of the French people that had won the election in 1936, and profited from it, though only temporarily.

The politicians had been doing this sort of thing for years, ever since Napoleon III granted universal suffrage. When the Emperor did that, many voters were uninformed, unprepared to assume a great responsibility. Easily fooled, they could be misled, so a campaign of education began, a fight to affect opinion, to control the vote, but it was really more than this.

It was a fight to control the army, the fighters, those men of action who were pledged solely to France, and so might seize the government in the interest of the French people. In the war they waged to prevent this, glib speakers had an advantage.

They were backed by the financiers.



## *THE FINANCIERS*

"History will be without pity for those before-the-war statesmen who did not insist on the creation of proper material, and for those who launched waves of assault without having the material necessary for such offensives."

Paul Reynaud.



## Mandel and Bankers

THE FINANCIERS distrusted the suffrage at first, and it never meant to them what it meant to the voters. With the voters the suffrage took the place of religion. For centuries the Church had convinced the less competent, the less fortunate that they would have their reward in Heaven. Now they were told they could vote and so create their own Heaven. With no such leader as the first Napoleon to arouse men's pride, some such concession was necessary. To Napoleon III it was a way of satisfying lesser men and so controlling them.

This method rather than the traditional one was employed because independent preachers and propagandists, such as Voltaire and Rousseau, had broken the hold of the Church on a vast number of men. For years it had been the Church that had restrained human passions. In the field of thought the Church had been the bulwark of the State, just as the army had been its safeguard in the field of action. But when Napoleon III was taken prisoner at Sedan, those who were to succeed him eventually were what they continued to be, suspicious of the Church and the army.

The fighters and the priests were likely to interfere with what these new rulers wished to do.

These successors to the Corsicans intended to profit from the Code Napoleon. By decreeing that all men were equal, the Code Napoleon leveled off everyone except those in control of the central authority, but these last had to keep the French in hand, and there



was little to restrain the highly emotionalized French masses, their feelings intensified by high taxes, wars and disasters, little or nothing to restrain them except the satisfaction they seemed to take in the vote. Along with the authority of the Church that had so long reined men in, that of the family had been weakened. That of the guilds had been broken entirely, and local self-government had been done away with in favor of a bureaucracy that made most men feel like nobodies.

This enraged them. As a result, if the successors of the Napoleons were to get away with the game they were playing, something had to be done to soothe the feelings of lesser men, to satisfy their pride.

This was satisfied by appealing to their vanity, by calling on them to decide great questions of state. In doing this, the lords of France ran no major risk. By confirming the right to vote, the authorities in Paris made the masses responsible for whatever happened. At the same time they gave them a chance to have their say.

The people swallowed this bait. If, like the meek, they had wished to inherit the earth, they would have insisted on minding their own business, but vanity got the better of good sense. Instead of demanding the right to govern what they knew and understood, their own town and locality, instead of expressing themselves, so far as business was concerned, through trade organizations, instead of trusting national and foreign affairs to those whom they would have made accountable with their lives for what they did, the French forgot the example set by the British when they built up a great navy.

They forgot that when an English admiral lost a battle, he was hanged.

This practice had a happy effect on other British admirals, but it was not a practice imitated by the French electorate. Because those who composed it were vain rather than meek, they accepted responsibility themselves, little realizing where this was leading them. As I have said, their rulers ran no major risk. When they

granted the people the suffrage, they were anything but the blind leading the blind.

They had two facts of the very first importance clearly in mind and they kept them in mind.

They knew that the vote made the masses, not their rulers, responsible for what happened, and this was a comforting thought in view of what happened to Louis XVI and the two Napoleons. But this permission to vote, these successors of the Emperors recognized, had to be controlled and organized, like religion, and circumstances were such that this organization, this control took a special form that has since been recognized as characteristic of the Third French Republic. Due to the peculiar nature of the set-up that the two Napoleons had willed to their successors, suffrage put a premium on two different qualities, the ability to win votes and the ability to make money.

These two qualities were destined to dominate France. Elections had to be fought and won now if a grip were to be kept on that centralized authority in Paris which permitted a favored few to do as they pleased, and elections are won by vote getters. But politicians need money to hire halls and paste up posters, to say nothing of the money needed to spread out those small contributions which pass from hand to hand and help voters to direct their thoughts in the right quarter. Of course the people who put up the money for these campaigns would want something in return, but quite as obviously the place to look for money is where money is, and in France the bankers had it.

This fact made the bankers important.

The banker had had a curious history in France. Like Napoleon, the Kings had kept the bankers under control.

This restraint led at times to dramatic incidents. Under Philip the Fair, who ruled in France from 1285 to 1314, the Lombards, who were Italian bankers, and the Jews, who were themselves, were thrown out of France. Under Louis XIV, the Huguenots suffered in the same fashion. Thanks to the King's policy of pro-

tecting French capital from foreign competition, a policy carried out by his Minister of Finance, Colbert, French manufacturers had grown rich. So had the Huguenots.

They were bankers, but propaganda has led us to believe that they were discriminated against because they were Protestants.

The truth is, they were discriminated against because they were competing with Majesty. Protestants, they had become a state within a state that was Catholic, and a powerful one because of their wealth. Like Louis' minister, Fouquet, whom he imprisoned for life because of his thefts, the Huguenots had more money than Louis. Furthermore, in revoking the Edict of Nantes that protected the Huguenots, Louis had the French people behind him.

They hated the Huguenots because the Huguenots lent money at high rates of interest, a usury condemned by the Catholic Church, and because the Huguenots represented the city against the country. But because what they had was in liquid form, the Huguenots were able to take it abroad with them, and when Rousseau's campaign for democracy succeeded they flooded back into France with their wealth. Under Louis XVI, Necker, the Protestant Swiss who was the King's Minister of Finance, furthered this invasion.

It strengthened his hand because, along with the Huguenots, there came into France Swiss bankers who had been friends of Necker's for years. In democracy they saw their chance.

They were most of them Free Masons, or allied with Masonry, and they underwrote the campaign of that group against its immemorial enemy, the Church, and against the established order of which the Church was a bulwark in the realm of thought. International political considerations, the competition for colonies, the American Revolution backed by France, led the English to do the same thing, so the Masons did not lack funds. But, in furthering Revolution, the bankers had special ends in view. By preaching the overthrow of the royal regime, they saw everything fall into chaos. Once this had happened, they bought up the pieces at bargain prices.

The royal princes and the nobles had been dispossessed on the ground that their land should go to the people. If it did in part and eventually, it did so in a curious way. Even a writer so sympathetic to the French Revolution as the American disciple of Jefferson, Thomas E. Watson, states frankly that the redistribution of land among the peasants passed through the hands of middlemen and that they exacted an enormous return from this transaction.

These middlemen were to meet with a power far stronger than theirs in Napoleon I, and with difficulties under Napoleon III. Like all dictators and would-be dictators in a democratic state, the second Emperor derived his power from his popular appeal. But however rich he planned to make them, this imperialist, like his uncle, exacted a great deal from the people in one way or another, so he had to do popular things that pleased them in an economic way, and spectacular things that thrilled them. In other words, he had to appeal to their material interest and their pride. Pride he salved by wars. As for prosperity, he spread it out, thinning the butter the privileged wanted. While much that the bankers wished Napoleon III to do was far-sighted, it would have displeased the populace, able to gauge no more than the money coming in over the counter, so, when the Emperor fell at Sedan, in a last mad appeal to popular passion, bankers and industrialists were able to dry their tears without using too many handkerchiefs.

This service to the late lamented duly performed, they watched with increasing approval the efforts of Thiers to piece together the picture puzzle that Napoleon had thrown into disorder. Everything was in chaos. Taking a balloon out of beleaguered Paris, Gambetta went south to organize an army to replace those which had surrendered. In the meantime, the Germans took the capital, but when Thiers, the minister who had almost driven King Louis Philippe into a war, put down the Commune, shooting workmen wholesale, and bought off the Germans, the bankers nodded their compliments and agreed to support him and his successors.

They had good reason to do so from their point of view. For one thing, these vote getters were anything but "men on horse-back" riding for a spectacular fall. For another, they were all the word "reasonable" has come to mean. Their election expenses, of course, they wanted, but, beyond that, they were never too exacting. Soon how the spoils should be divided was pretty well understood, and campaigns were underwritten and organized.

The shock troops of the campaigns were held in line by jobs given them by the government. Of this army of lesser people, nearly half a million were civil servants, another sixty thousand were employees of the state, and at the disposition of the state were over one hundred thousand tobacco shops and similar soft ways of earning a living. Because it assures a nucleus of votes, politicians always build up the civil service, and, naturally, those who were given jobs in it were predisposed to favor the re-election of job-givers to the Senate and Chamber of Deputies. As for these representatives of the people, they had their pay and privileges. In addition, if they were lawyers or competent in other respects, they were handed fees as advisers to banks and dependent companies. One of them saw what a help the national debt was.

No effort was made to cut this down, but it was kept widely distributed and so influenced all those who put their savings in government bonds. Called *rentiers* in France, they represented a majority of the French population and one to which any attack on the government that affected the value of government bonds meant an attack on their investment.

The moment such an attack developed in the Chamber or the Senate, it was reflected on the Stock Exchange. Values declined. As a result, investors could not sell their bonds and get back the amount they had paid for them, and they might need money at any moment. War and a moratorium were always just around the corner. So the *rentiers* were inclined to resent attacks on the government and this had a steadying influence.

The bankers helped the government by keeping bonds well

distributed among the people, thus affecting a large vote. But they had other reasons for sustaining the government than a general belief in stability. For one thing, before the 1914 war bankers in France were paying depositors only one-half of one percent on their money. This same money the bankers were relending to the government on short-term loans at two and one-half percent. Here was a two-percent profit and a fairly constant one, for the government was always in need of funds. Even if it had not been, the bankers would have encouraged government spending.

It was in their interest to keep the government buying.

The great companies the bankers were allied with, or controlled, fed richly on government contracts, mostly handed out by the War, Navy and Public Works Ministries. If there were fear of war, the need of supplies—and battleships—increased, and at all times soldiers and sailors in large numbers had to be clothed, fed and armed. So did the population. Nothing is more dangerous to vested interests, or politically, than an unstable economic system, so this was supervised carefully. Regulated from Paris, it maintained its authority by means of that centralized control known as the Bank of France.

This had been founded by Napoleon and he put private bankers in charge. With Napoleon ruling in France, these bankers did as he said.

They were no more than trustees to whom he delegated power. But with Napoleon and his nephew gone, these bankers themselves took charge, assuming on their own account the responsibility for national finance and economy and so for that part of a political appeal that is aimed at pleasing men by caring for their material interest. That they did this well, it would be absurd to deny. Between wars they made France rich. But was this wealth well distributed? Foreign trade had to be built up because French purchasing power was low. Workmen were underpaid. But even so they were able to save. Savings mounted constantly. Still there was enough cause for complaint to give demagogues a chance.

Escaping from the central financial control, men like Jaurès and Blum staged political appeals independently of the conservative and long-established banks, but in doing so, they made men like George Mandel important. Like Tardieu, Mandel was a lieutenant of Clemenceau.

He came from near Bordeaux, from the district where they made soft red wines and sugared white ones. His name, it seems, was Jereboam Rothchild. Though his patronym was spelled without the "s" that the famous bankers use, Mandel early decided to go into politics where bankers were growing unpopular. Mindful of this fact, he took his mother's name and called himself George in honor of Clemenceau. Beyond this, little was known about him, though many stories were told, among them that at fourteen he asked for a subscription to the *Journal Officiel*, the Congressional Record of France, and began learning it by heart. Certainly incident after incident showed that his memory was prodigious, as George Clemenceau was to learn when Mandel walked into his newspaper office and sat down with an air of coming to stay.

He wanted a job, he explained to the veteran Tiger when the old man finally saw him.

"But why here? I have no money," Clemenceau told him.

"You are you," Mandel answered briefly, his slender figure hunched forward, his thin lips clipping the words short. Though he leaned back astonished, Clemenceau seems to have sensed from the first that here was a man who really liked him.

This proved to be the case. Like Tardieu, Mandel not only liked Clemenceau, he understood him, and those who did were few and far between. Again and again, the man who was destined to save France alienated those who wished to be friendly, estranging them by his savage comments, his starts of contempt. But that these concealed deep emotions that Clemenceau feared would betray him, Mandel realized. Without wavering, he served the old Tiger, collecting those stores of information which led the uneasy to suspect that in his library Mandel had catalogued "more facts

that shouldn't be known" than were kept in a safe anywhere else in France. However this may have been, in 1917 and 1918 Mandel acted as if he knew in what closets many skeletons were hidden. While this helped Clemenceau, it was resented. After the war, for two hours pandemonium reigned in the Chamber while this pale, bloodless man, Mandel, tried unsuccessfully to make himself heard. Nor did he have the popular touch. Why was obvious. Efficient? Quite! "He's that all right!" the French politician, Henry Franklin-Bouillon, exploded.

"Just like an adding machine is," he went on, "and he has precisely the same charm."

The result was, Mandel had to wait for his chance. In the meantime, there had been a shift in the seats of the mighty.

"The old-timers," the erstwhile masters of production, had been forced out of politics. Where politicians formerly had been called on only to handle propaganda, now they had to know business, too. Mandel knew both, so a place was made for him when propaganda led the French public to turn thumbs down on de Wendel.



## II

### Thumbs Down on de Wendel

THE PROPAGANDA loosed against such industrialists as the de Wendels reacted finally on the bankers. New bankers attacked the old ones, and for an obvious reason. As Mandel understood, propaganda has only one purpose, to get power away from those who hold it. But it falls into two categories.

It appeals both to men's pride and to their material interest. At arousing men's vanity, the French Revolutionists were masters. But their intention was to destroy the state before rebuilding it, so they attacked first what most makes for stability in a nation, that naturally, instinctively conservative nucleus, the family. By telling men that they should "go on their own," "be themselves," by preaching individualism, the right of every child to inherit equally, Rousseau and the Revolutionists broke down the cohesion that held the family together when the eldest son inherited everything, but was responsible for the welfare of all. Indicting this doctrine, the Revolutionists at the same time attacked the monarch, his heirs, his diplomats and soldiers, the Church and its priests, everyone who, in the fields of thought and action, sustained the family.

This attack took several forms. To begin with, people were told that if the restraints of government and religion were removed, they "could have a good time," and "having a good time" was illustrated meaningfully by books, magazines, paintings and even statues, until that "gay, that so naughty Paris" became a by-word

tempting tourists. That "you are just as competent to judge art as the professors and artists," the Revolutionists assured the average man, but the so-called "higher criticism" took a subtler form. Where Montaigne had been a skeptic discussing from a high vantage point, and urbanely, the questions of life, Renan stepped down from this high pulpit, took sides and concentrated on details. "Exposing" the dogma of the Roman Catholic Church was his specialty, surely a petty one compared to Montaigne's. But he had an effect. Offending the simple faith of millions, he justified the disrespect of another numerous company, and what Renan had done with dignity, Anatole France continued, pointing his comment with vulgar allusions, sharpening his attack by the clear way he expressed himself, the often exquisite turns he gave to his prose. However, these assaults on the distinctions of religion were of minor importance.

The suffrage made less subtle effects inevitable if the Revolutionists were to keep their hold on France. As modern writers of any standing recognize, the people were by no means ready to assume the responsibility thrust on them by the vote.

The results they got surprised them. Did they vote for the twenty-three years of war that bled France white under the Revolution and Napoleon? Hardly! Did they consciously invite Prussia into France, ask for Sedan? The answer is obviously no. Furthermore, their reaction to disaster necessitated mass propaganda. Easy many men may be to fool, and venal to the point of selling their vote, but a belief in sane living tends to arouse a majority in the end, and in the course of French history the members of this majority again and again flooded into the streets, armed with any weapon they could find. Against such manifestations as these, police are helpless, so not once, often, the people themselves brought misgovernment to an end. But mobs frequently go too far, and no government is perfect.

The danger of governing others the bankers and industrialists, in alliance with the politicians, minimized by their control of the

press and education. But they had no more begun to make money, after Napoleon III disappeared, than they were challenged in their own bailiwick. Rivals invaded the domain pre-empted by the Huguenots and the Swiss who had returned to France with Necker and allied themselves with the Rothschilds, and these rivals backed the Socialist leader, Jean Jaurès, founding a paper for him and paying him a curiously high salary for editing it. Soon it was evident why they had done this. Jaurès began preaching disarmament, striking at the heart of the old crowd's source of income, staging a wonderful show by attacking the rich. People enjoy such assaults even more than horse races or motion pictures. Furthermore, into his appeals to class hatred, Jaurès wound an appeal to the poor man's pocketbook. "Vote against armaments," he said, "and the money so saved can be spent on you."

This argument was to be continued by Blum, after the war of 1914. By then the ground had been thoroughly prepared for the change from the individual ownership dear to the average Frenchman, to the collective ownership that would make politicians overlords of the economic system. Many circumstances favored this change. For one thing, the agricultural aristocracy had been disinherited and was no longer able to look after the less wealthy farmers. Heavy taxes on land had forced them to borrow, and foreclosures had thrown their property into the hands of the bankers. Tenants no longer dealt with personal landlords.

They dealt with impersonal corporations. Money lenders had replaced those who, if they were wealthy, at least lived in their own community and because of their training and tradition conformed to a well-known standard, one often described as the honor standard. In conformity with this, they did what they could for their less fortunate neighbors, and in any case, if they made mistakes, they came home to face the music.

They could always be found at the château. Bankers were mysterious, caged behind grilles, unaware of local conditions. As for the deputies now being sent to Parliament—but what of these

deputies? Many stories were being whispered. Had they, by their private lives, laid themselves open to coercion? Questions were being asked.

There were tales of blackmail and bribery. Whether or no all this accounted for the failure to vote reforms, there was no question whatever that there had been a shift of the population from the country to the city. Industry had become far more important than agriculture, and the control of industry was concentrated in the hands of the Regents of the Bank of France and of industrialists like the Schneiders and the de Wendels, a group known collectively as The Two Hundred Families.

The de Wendels were typical of this group. Ironmasters, manufacturers of steel in every form, miners of coal, they came originally from Germany, and their relatives were still powerful there and closely allied with their French cousins.

The properties held by both branches of the family were concentrated on the German border near Briey, in German and French Lorraine. By withdrawing troops ten kilometers from the border in July, 1914, the French emphasized their peaceful intentions, but they also allowed the Germans to seize this territory from which the French had always obtained ninety percent of their ore. By failing to bombard this district afterward, the French allowed the Germans to mine it and from these mines the Germans obtained five-sixths, approximately, of the steel, iron, and other materials, that enabled them to continue the war. Without it, they would have had to stop fighting, so why were they never attacked there? In bitter terms, Anatole France answered the question. "When we think we are dying for our country," he wrote, "we are only dying for the industrialists."

This is a summary explanation. Believing that the war would be a short one, the French General Staff depended on the Schneider works at Creusot for guns, and hoped by an enveloping movement to force the Germans out of Briey and recover the de Wendel mines intact. But if the French had attacked there in the beginning,

instead of withdrawing, experts have since agreed, the war would have been a short one. General Serrail, one of his corps commanders, General Varraux, and the military critic, General Malletterre, were particularly explicit about this. So were many others. In the end, there was no question that the mines at Briey were spared deliberately, that the artillery was forbidden to shoot at trains moving ore into Germany, and the aviation prevented from bombarding this sacred territory. That this was due to pressure from the great industrial alliances and their leaders, the public grew to believe, so when the de Wendels came up for a hearing in the court of opinion, the people turned thumbs down.

The story of Briey would have been enough, but in other respects, too, propaganda dressed the industrialists, then the bankers, for execution.

The sort of propaganda that gave the rich a bad name affected the politicians also, nor was it new in France. Catherine de' Medici had been accused of gathering pretty girls around her—a group known as "The Light Brigade"—and using them to corrupt and seduce everyone she wanted to influence, beginning with her sons. By setting up a girls' finishing school known as the Parc aux Cerfs, the Pompadour had ministered to Louis XV's waning passions and so maintained her influence over him, a subject treated deftly by Sacha Guitry in *Remontons les Champs Elysées*. But the idea that using women to influence men is confined to France is absurd. Everywhere in the world this sort of thing goes on, even in America. In Alabama recently, a dark—but, I understand, a very charming young lady—referred to this very thing.

She was resisting a young man's suggestion as to the best way to pass the evening.

"You don' understand," he protested. "I ain't no ordinary nigger come here to proposition you. I got prospects! I'm working on one of them public works projects where them politicians is pourin' out money like water."

The young lady snorted.

"Boy, you don' know nothin'," she said. "You come down to New Orleans an' I'll show you a house where politicians *is* politicians and has their fun in a big way. They don' pour water. Not down there they don't! They pours champagne."

They also "pours" champagne in France. Naturally, where they poured it (and with whom!) aroused interest, and the suggestion was made that other darlings than those who formed Catherine's Light Brigade, and the Pompadour's group of school girls, had taken advantage of the fact that boys will be boys at odd, and protected, moments. But all of this did not go on behind closed doors.

The French were never hypocrites. Many never even attempted to conceal their relations with other women than their wives. That anyone should be astonished by the Belgian King Leopold II's friendship with Cleo de Merode or the Baroness Vaughan, or King Edward VII's fancies, would occur to no Frenchman. But women in politics? That was another matter! As many recalled, when the French President, Felix Faure, died, it was after a visit paid him at the Elysée by the pretty, dark-eyed wife of an artist, Madame Steinheil.

He had been taking drugs, she said, the kind of drug that stimulates a man's physical interest in a woman, and died from the effect it had on his heart.

She was to be accused later of murdering her husband and her mother. But when she was arrested and charged with these crimes, what the French really wanted to know was whether La Steinheil had murdered Faure in order to help Dreyfus, the Jewish officer accused of selling military secrets to the Germans. Faure was convinced that Dreyfus was guilty. Knowing Faure's frail health, La Steinheil locked him in those voluptuous arms of hers. But had she done this in order to get rid of him, and, if so, at whose instigation? Dreyfus was a victim of the German intrigue to bring on war with France, as an American Ambassador, John G. A. Leishman, was to prove years later.

This story, with all its sensational implications, will be told for the first time later on in this book.

The proof that sustains it is obvious enough.

But no one ever proved Madame Steinheil's connection with Dreyfus, the Germans or international financiers. She was acquitted of murder too, as Madame Caillaux was just before the war broke out in 1914. As for Joseph Caillaux, there was no question where he stood.

He was against war with Germany.

He was Minister of Finance in 1914, and Raymond Poincaré, then President of the French Republic, was in favor of recovering Alsace and Lorraine. Close to the de Wendel interests, Poincaré was accused, along with the former Premier, Louis Barthou, of having given stolen letters to Gaston Calmette, the editor of the conservative morning newspaper, *Le Figaro*.

These letters were love letters written by Joseph Caillaux to his wife, revealing, embarrassing letters, signed "*Ton Jo*"—in English, "*Thy Jo*." Calmette published them in *Le Figaro*, and on March sixteenth, 1914, Madame Caillaux shot and killed Calmette. Many ascribe her acquittal later to the public feeling that Madame Poincaré, the wife of the President, had not been a stranger to the maneuver directed against Caillaux and designed to embarrass him because he was against involving France in a war between Germany and Russia. Unquestionably the French felt at the time—and they still did in 1939—that women should stay out of politics, whether they were wives or mistresses of the Presidents, or whoever they were. But they had another reason for disliking Madame Poincaré. As Poincaré himself knew, the French distrust foreigners, and Madame Poincaré had been married to a man named Dominick Killoran in New York.

Her divorce and remarriage to a Frenchman, Arthur Bazire, who left her a wealthy widow, was also used against the former Adeline Henriette Benucci when, after a long friendship, she married Raymond Poincaré on August seventeenth, 1904. But much

more was brought up. That she was born out of wedlock and later legitimatized, Paul Allard states in his book, *The Secrets of the Élysée*, and the Duc de Morny once answered a question of mine by saying, "Her first husband? A cab driver, I hear." That might have passed, for "her second husband was mayor of Deauville," the Duchesse d'Uzès told me, "but we older conservatives don't believe in divorce," she added, with a not unkindly smile.

The Duchess sympathized, for she, too, had dipped slim fingers in politics, spending a fortune on General Boulanger's cause, and, when he killed himself, an exile, on another woman's grave, journalists hunted a story. "Always ready to believe the worst," the Duchess cautioned me, "they got nowhere then. But they made the most of the Poincarés," involving in a tapestry of small talk a famous general and two royal sovereigns.

These dignitaries were rude to Madame Poincaré, but there was more here than met the eye. Simple and casual her past and her origins may have been, but, as the novelist, Victor Margueritte, who wrote *La Garçonne*, revealed, this was a detail. What really roused the French was the support she gave her husband's policy.

This policy was interpreted as no more than a scheme to help the great industrialists recover the rich minerals in Alsace and Lorraine. But it was after the war that attacks on these same industrialists grew more pointed. Before the war, as I have said, new bankers interested in wresting power from "the old-timers" had backed Jaurès and established a paper for him. In this, and in public speeches, he had preached disarmament. After the war, "the new Jews," as they were called, were directed by Horace Finaly, the head of the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas, an organization with extended and powerful international relations. Friendly with Herriot, Finaly was credited with being opposed to rearmament, and armament sales meant extra money to the old-time industrialists who were the backbone of the established banking group. If armaments could not be sold in France, they could be sold abroad, so war scares were underwritten, it was alleged.



The French gun manufacturer, Eugene Schneider, it was pointed out, had an interest in the Skoda works in Czecho-Slovakia. Were these works rearming Germany? the Socialists asked. Along with "that merchant of murder," the international munitions king, Sir Basil Zaharoff, Schneider was attacked as the de Wendels had been. But if Finaly backed Herriot, it was only to see Herriot forced from power. Taking up where he left off, Chautemps fell a victim to the Stavisky scandal, nor did Daladier survive long. When he went, following the riots of February sixth, 1934, the bankers' candidate, Doumergue, came in, along with the industrialists' chief advocate, Tardieu. But it was Doumergue's successor, Pierre Etienne Flandin, who made Mandel Minister of Post, Telegraph and Telephone—in short, of communications, with authority over the radio. Soon Mandel was quoted as saying, "We can form opinion, inspire in people reactions which they believe originated in themselves, but which, in reality, we have suggested."

He understood propaganda, in other words, so the bankers kept him in mind when Blum began to worry them.

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### III

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## Schneider Yields to Jouhaux

THE SO-CALLED Two Hundred Families, led by Schneider and the de Wendels, needed Mandel because they themselves had mismanaged the appeal in France to men's material interest. Instead of building up purchasing power at home, they had sought foreign markets. If foreigners did not have money, the Two Hundred persuaded the French public to buy foreigners' bonds.

These bonds were often dubious investments, and counter-propaganda made the most of this fact.

It centered attention on three charges: first, the accusation that war scares were deliberately stirred up; second, that heavy sales abroad, particularly of armament and munitions, resulted from these scares; and, last, that these sales were financed in France, where the French investor ran a great risk of losing his money because foreigners were in no position to pay it back, at least in the near future. Unquestionably, these accusations had an effect. On the other hand, the Two Hundred Families were strongly entrenched.

They controlled the Bank of France. When other banks lent money, they had to take "promises to repay" to the Bank of France. If the Bank thought these promises were good, they refunded the money lent, leaving it to the minor bank to collect from the borrower.

This practice gave the Regents of the Bank of France tremendous power. Of these fifteen Regents, six represented industry,

six banking and three the government. Of the bankers five had inherited their Regency. For the most part, they were descendants of those Huguenots who had come back to France with Necker in Louis XVI's time. Directors of many companies, they dominated French business.

The sixth banker was a Rothschild.

The other Regents were the governor and two sub-governors appointed by the French government, men like the famous economist, Charles Rist. Such appointees, however, were required to hold a sizeable number of shares and these the Regents usually lent them. Furthermore, these civil servants, if they co-operated with Big Business, were assured a prosperous future in private industry. For example, when Finaly lost control of the Banque de Paris et des Pays Bas, Rist was among those who moved in there from the Bank of France. Elsewhere, too, Big Business requited public servants whose activities were pleasing. On the richly rewarded board of the Suez Canal Company it had placed the former President, Gaston Doumergue, and the former Chief of the General Staff, General Maxime Weygand.

It also received personages of this stature in exclusive clubs like the Jockey, the Oeillet Blanc, and the Cercle de l'Union. Through trade organizations like the Confédération Générale de la Production Française and the Comité des Forges, it exercised its influence both commercially and politically. In charities, too, its members were prominent. But it was at the races that the Two Hundred showed at their best.

The French love horses, and the stables of the Rothschilds, the Viel-Picards and others, provided them with exhilarating sport in the open air. Crowds came to the courses, not only to see the horses, but the personages of Paris, men and women. Talented and smart, often brilliant these people undoubtedly were, but, more than anything else, they served to divert attention.

They diverted attention from a fact far more important than they were, the fact that the French workman could not afford to

buy, a circumstance which affected vitally the workman's opinion of everything in France. As the French worker knew, French welfare had become dependent on foreigners, and overseas the democracies were buying the cheap products of mass production. Every year there was less demand for quality, for what skilled workmen in France had specialized in for years. As a result, French artisans were being forced out of business. Because they were blind, some said, the commanders of industry in France did nothing about this.

They left it to Jaurès and Blum to warm the water with which to clean up this situation, and Jaurès and Blum did their best. But, strangely enough, it was Pierre Laval who brought this water to a boil.

He had succeeded Tardieu as the bankers' stand-by, and, when he came to power in 1935 with the right to rule by decree, the bankers stopped selling France short, raised the rate of interest and so kept gold in the country. In exchange, Laval cut salaries to please the industrialists.

He also tried to cut prices, but he did not succeed sufficiently. Caught between two fires, salary cuts and high costs, the poor suffered. So, as was to have been expected, in 1936 they voted for Blum, and Blum reformed the Bank of France.

The Regents had previously been elected by the two hundred shareholders who held the largest number of shares. Now two Regents were to be elected by all the shareholders, eight appointed as representatives of the Finance Ministry and other government institutions, six chosen by the Minister of Finance from representatives of employers' and workers' associations, and there was to be a representative appointed from the Ministry of the Colonies, another from the Ministry of National Economy, and another from the National Economic Council. Still another was to be elected by the employees of the Bank. While all this was new, the parade into office of the new governors of the Bank of France was brightened by comedy, for among the new Regents was the leader of the French Federation of Labor.

This leader of the Confédération Générale du Travail, familiarly known as the C. G. T., was a man named Leon Jouhaux. By no means without ability, he had a clownish gift for evoking applause. But this was not all. One of the fattest men in France, he had proved himself, nevertheless, an energetic organizer, and he knew how to make the most of workingmen's discontent.

This he centered cleverly on those who had money. Left on his own by the rich, the workman in France had come to realize that all he could do was get what he could "while the getting was good," as Jouhaux put it. That it would not continue to be good, this labor leader seemed to foresee. Once the production of armaments had been nationalized by Blum, the production of armaments fell off alarmingly, and the same slide down hill was noticeable elsewhere, in industries throughout France. While salaries had been pushed up, they had been cut tragically by the devaluation of the franc. Though this weakened the masses' faith in Blum, they continued to trust Jouhaux. Sick of the bankers and industrialists, they stuck to their leader, only to desert him when he organized a general strike as a protest against the agreements reached with Hitler at Munich. What the German dictator demanded in September, 1938, was that the Sudeten Germans and their territory should be detached from Czecho-Slovakia and allotted to the Reich. To those who really believed in "the self-determination of peoples," and to a majority of the French workers, Hitler's demand seemed on the whole fair. Besides neither France nor England were prepared to fight, so they yielded. While there was wide room for argument as to whether they should or should not have done this, a general strike was a dangerous form of protest. Nevertheless, Jouhaux, encouraged by the Socialists and the Communists, called it.

This strike Daladier broke. From that moment Jouhaux's power declined. While he had replaced Schneider, the de Wendels, Louis Renault, the automobile manufacturer, and their like, as a provider of work, he had done so only temporarily. But he had

seen clear through to the heart of the problem. Realizing that the industrialists and the bankers had allowed the cost of living to influence to a dangerous extent the workers' opinion, he had made the most of the situation. As a result, despite his failings, only a minority wanted the old system back now, so the problem was to find politicians who could manage the French economy. But managing this was not all a politician had to do.

He had to make the people believe in what he was trying to do.

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## IV

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### Armaments and Reynaud

THE BUSINESS of popularizing recovery in France was helped by the threat from abroad. Convinced at last that the danger was very real, when Hitler seized what was left of Czecho-Slovakia in March, 1939, the French went in for rearmament thoroughly.

This meant not only guns and munitions, it meant a speeding up of the whole production system. But where this system had formerly been in the hands of businessmen, it was now in the hands of the government. Blum had won that fight. But if he had been a successful special pleader, he had failed as an executive, and Daladier had come forward.

A man of few words, Daladier as Premier symbolized the nation's liking for men of action, and he had the army with him. Propaganda built him up, too, but this appeal to men's pride was not enough. With businessmen and incompetent politicians pushed into the discard, if the new political control was to survive competent organizers had to be found among politicians, and though Mandel had maneuvered Blum's downfall, he was also a Jew, and Blum had favored his own Jews to such an extent that anti-Semitism had revived in France. So Mandel kept in the background. But he stuck to his job.

He was Minister of the Colonies. Taking office at Daladier's request in April, 1938, Mandel called his staff together.

"What has been done in the colonies for defense?" he asked. "What!" he exclaimed when they answered him. "Gentlemen, we

have sixty million people in our overseas empire, and the colonies can send only half a million men to the mainland? I must look into this."

He did. Going to Daladier, he said, "From 1914 to 1918 the colonies raised 354,000 men, of whom 275,000 were safely brought to France. I propose to give France a colonial army of two million men. In order to co-operate intelligently, I want to be made a member of the Superior Committee of National Defense, and I want you to lend me General Bührer."

This officer was one of Daladier's most trusted advisers, and the Premier, who was also Minister of National Defense, with the army, navy and air force all under his control, parted with him only in the hope of impressive results. At the Colonial Ministry, these were realized. General officers with distinguished records, such as Gatroux, Dubuisson, Roucaud and Legentilhomme, were ordered to far places. From there they sent nearly one and a half million trained men to France before the war began in 1939, and the rest of the two million Mandel put under arms were kept at their native stations in readiness to defend them. But such armies, like the French army itself, have to be equipped.

This task Paul Reynaud undertook.

The difference between Paul Reynaud and the Finance Ministers who preceded him was that Reynaud had been right as to the need for an early, sound and carefully managed devaluation. Born in Barcelonnette in the Alps, under the Provence sun, he was a little man who screwed up his face like a monkey when he talked. But he always had something to say, and it was, for the most part, worth hearing. After studying to be a lawyer, he had gone into politics. Elected a Deputy right after the war, he advocated taking payment in kind from Germany and building up her economic power so she would be able to take care of herself, a policy displeasing to Poincaré and others. But Reynaud stuck to his guns. "If you drive the Germans to desperation, look out for an explosion," he warned.



He became a minister for the first time in 1930. Announcing that the fall in the value of raw materials throughout the world would affect even France in the end, though France was then rich with gold, he was pushed out of the Finance Ministry because of this dour prophecy, but not out of the government. Leaving the mistaken to fill his shoes, he became Colonial Minister, and there he met Marshal Lyautey, the distinguished soldier who had built France's colonial empire in North Africa. "In the beginning we fought," the Marshal told the Princess Bibesco, who wrote the story of her interview with him for the famous French weekly, *L'Illustration*.

"One can always reach an understanding with the mediocre," the Marshal went on. "But Reynaud is someone!" Like all the traditional French, family and land meant everything to Lyautey, "and Reynaud comes from the mountains," he reminded the Princess. "That gives him a certain quality," the Marshal insisted. However that may be, Reynaud did not stay in the mountains. Of all French statesmen of his time, he was the most widely traveled.

He had been with General Janin in Siberia during the war, and was the first Minister of the Colonies to go out to China.

There he ended the revolt in North Annam by persuasive argument.

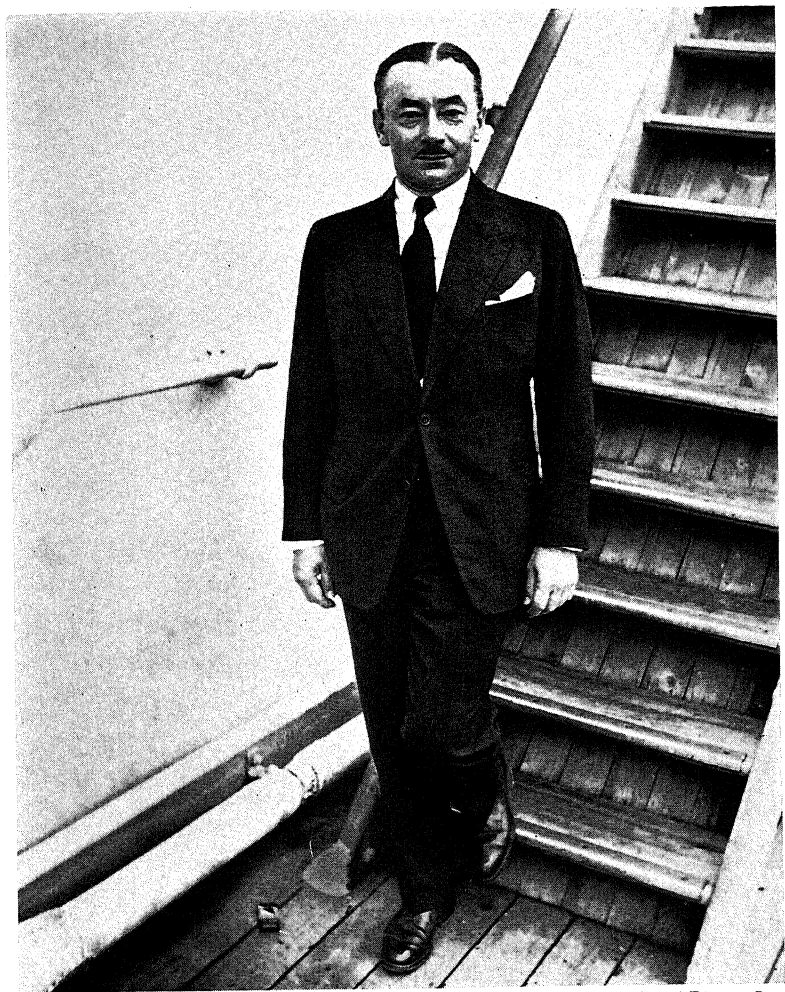
An endless worker, sleeping little, he learned by asking questions, as I found out when I was sent to see him by an American publisher.

"But what about *him*?" Reynaud asked immediately.

The publisher in question was a man of great wealth who had had a sensational difference of opinion with the French authorities. In addition, his personal affairs had aroused an embarrassing amount of interest. Finally, I interrupted Reynaud, putting up my hand like a child in school.

"Yes," he said.

"I thought you might like to save your breath, Monsieur le



Wide World Photos, Inc.

The French Minister of Finance, Paul Reynaud, arriving in New York in 1936 aboard the *Ile-de-France*.



Ministre," I remarked. "I can't answer your questions, so let me ask one. When are you going to devalue here? If you devalue now, before it is too late, you can get some benefit from it, be able to meet competition in the world market."

"You're saying just what I say."

"I know it. I read what you say."

He was flying across India when he learned that England had abandoned the gold standard. Knowing this meant that English goods would cost less to produce in terms of gold, the standard recognized internationally, and that England would therefore be able to undersell France abroad, Reynaud rushed home and began his long fight to lower the gold value of the franc and so French prices. While that would have lowered salaries, if prices had been kept down this would not have mattered to the workers. But it would have mattered to bondholders.

The gold value of bonds would have been lessened. But you must do what you should, he warned the French classes. Otherwise, a more intelligent class will take your place.

He pleaded in vain.

"An overvalued franc is killing France, and yet you praise it," he complained. "Well, all I can say is this, that in one respect the savage is your superior. When he is dying of tuberculosis, he doesn't know that it is the so-called Koch bacillus that is killing him. But if he did know this, at least he wouldn't shout, '*Vive le bacille de Koch.*' But that is just about what you do. You cry, '*Vive le franc à quinze (fifteen) francs pour le dollar*!' Don't you realize what you're doing? England, America, Germany, nearly every nation except Switzerland and Holland, is underselling France abroad, and France must have foreign trade. Every year we have an unfavorable balance of trade and this is no longer made up for by what tourists spend here. Thanks to the franc's high value, they cannot afford to buy it and come here, because the gold value of the dollar and pound has been lowered."

These home truths made Reynaud unpopular with the saving French. Having put their money in bonds, they wanted them to keep their high value. Presently, when it was too late to meet competition abroad, too late to recover lost markets, the franc was forced from fifteen to thirty-seven, then to forty and worse to the dollar.

A whole series of devaluations told the story of what Reynaud had predicted. In the meantime he had tackled an even more ticklish subject, the question of armament. Reminding the French, as Maurras had, of what happened in 1914, when the money that should have been spent on arms was spent on politics, leaving the French nothing to do but block the frontier with their bodies because they had no machines, Reynaud cited figures.

These "gave the French to think," to translate a French expression literally. For "what are the lessons of the Great War?" Reynaud asked.

"The first is," he answered, "that you must never begin an offensive until you have the means to make it effective. To throw men against barbed wire behind which enemies with machine guns are entrenched is out of the question. As Colonel (later Marshal) Pétain warned us before the World War, 'fire kills.' Alas! In 1914, in five months, the Germans killed or wounded a million of our men, while we were wounding or killing only 750,000 Germans. In 1915, our losses were 1,300,000; theirs, on our front, 600,000, that is less than half our own loss.

"This is a frightful condemnation, not of the offensive, but of the negligence that deprived it of appropriate weapons. Though everything showed that what was needed was heavy artillery to smash barbed wire and trenches, it was not until the spring of 1915 that the high command of our army decided to ask for heavy artillery, and it was more than a year before it was ready." Continuing an indictment that an American Ambassador described privately as "terrifying," Reynaud referred to France's falling birth rate, its lack of men, crying, "So it was the people who were the poorest in

man power, who had the fewest men, who built a hecatomb of men.

"History," he declared, "will be without pity for those before-the-war statesmen who did not insist on the creation of proper material, and for those who launched waves of assault without having the material necessary for such offensives."

This echo of all Charles Maurras had been saying for years, Reynaud rendered specific by proposing an army of experts trained to handle the most modern and effective weapons, men of quality handling armament characterized by quality. But quality in one place implies quality all along the line, in other words expert government. Admitting this, Reynaud said later, "I have never denied that if the Republic means making the least possible effort, then France must change its regime if it is to survive. But by its adaptation to the needs of the hour, our regime has shown that there is nothing in the charge that it is unequal to the present crisis."

The regime had been useful to "the new bankers" who liked Reynaud. Using republican methods, they had pushed Herriot into power, then Blum. So why not Reynaud? Well, for one thing, though he had once been opposed to the Soviets, he was now thought to be too friendly to them and to the crowd that Anthony Eden represented in England, people of whom the French were growing suspicious. What was more, one of Reynaud's close friends was the international banker, Fritz Mannheimer.

The feeling that Reynaud favored continuing parliamentarianism also worked against him, for Tardieu had made clear what parliamentarianism meant. After the general strike broken by Daladier in the fall of 1938, Tardieu had written, "If you don't want all this to begin all over again, you must not be content only with breaking the strike. You must crack up the parliamentary profession, which is the author of all our ills, and give France other institutions." Gaston Jèze, too, sounded a warning. Professor at the College of France, as Poincaré's adviser in 1926 Jèze had rebuilt the franc. Regarded as one of the foremost authorities in

France on economics and politics, he was a member of "the brain trust" of the Radical Socialist Party, and knew what Daladier's supporters were thinking.

"The regime itself is in question," he wrote. "Parliamentarianism, as it has been practiced for several years, is irremediably condemned. It has been a weak thing, full of compromises, adjournments, retreats before the threats of certain political adventurers, a thing concerned almost entirely with the business of getting re-elected, and peopled by toadies outbidding one another for popular favor."

These were tough words, but they left Reynaud undisturbed, for Reynaud, whatever he might say publicly, whatever high C's he may have contributed to the general harmony, had been one of those who had stabbed parliamentarianism to death. By "its adaptation to the needs of the hour," parliamentarianism had shown itself equal to the crisis, Reynaud had said. But his whole meaning was flavored by that one word, adaptation. As he knew, only part of the public voted.

This minority elected a minority, and a minority of this minority sustained a government. In the case of Reynaud, Mandel and Daladier, their ministry was voted dictatorial powers by a minority made up of the Radical Socialists and the Center parties, approved by the parties on the Right, and Daladier's cabinet, made up of a minority of a minority of a minority, ruled through Daladier, subject only to a veto that the President of the Republic never exercised. In other words, parliamentarianism had given way to government by experts, to government from above, for the voters, through the Deputies, no longer exercised any influence.

They had been overridden by a public opinion fashioned by the great personalities of France, an opinion that approved of Daladier. But to say that the people had the same confidence in Reynaud would be an exaggeration. From the first Reynaud had pursued what his enemies described as "a banker's policy."

He had coaxed capital back into France by favorable rates of

interest and by creating favorable opportunities for investment, and with the gold capital brought in he was able to buy abroad what France needed in order to rearm. But in doing this, he solved only part of the problem.

His real problem was to persuade labor to co-operate with capital, above all with efficient management, and here he ran into difficulties.

The French workmen had had for years a very real grievance. In the guilds that Saint Louis called into being, he had been assured of a living. In these guilds there were apprentices, artisans, foremen and masters. Apprentices paid for their education. Like the artisans and foremen, who were paid, they were bound by contract to the master. But masters got where they were through ability.

They worked their way up from the bottom, but they had a tendency to do things as they had always done them, to resist innovations, to refuse to use inventions. While they barred out competition and conserved resources so that no one starved, the guilds became difficult to get into and so aroused resentment. As early as 1614, there was a clamor against them, but it was not until 1776 that Turgot, a free trader, suppressed them, though only temporarily. By what was called the Le Chapelier law, the Revolution suppressed the guilds entirely in 1791. Unions and syndicates were forbidden.

It was perhaps less this law than invention and industry that put French workmen at a disadvantage. With mass production getting under way, they were forced to work from thirteen to fourteen hours a day. Four, five and six-year-old children were employed. But in 1841, a law was passed making it illegal to employ children until they were eight years old. In 1848 working hours were limited to twelve a day. In 1874 another reform protected both children and women, and ten years later unions were made legal. But workers were protected in their right to join these unions, or stay out. Finally, in 1906 a weekly day of rest was made



obligatory, though it was not until 1917 that Saturday afternoons off were allowed. In 1919 the eight-hour day was decreed.

The real problem was still low pay. In France, a stenographer earned in a month less than one in America earned in a week. To this problem Blum addressed himself. By validating what were called *Les Accords Matignons*, signed June seventh, 1936, workers and employers, through their representatives, agreed to co-operate in an attempt to raise salaries and adjust differences, and these accords were given the force of law when Blum, as Premier, prevailed on Parliament to ratify them. At the same time, Blum wrote into the law statutes making two weeks' paid vacation, forty hours a week of work, and the arbitration of disputes obligatory.

He went too fast. Costs rose, buyers struck. Abroad French sales fell off because French goods cost more than American and English. Meeting this problem, Paul Reynaud increased hours of work and regulated pay. Damning the France where "everyone had a tendency to want more money, but less work, more gifts from the state but fewer taxes, to rest more and to give less, more old-age pensions but fewer children," he announced that a new France had been born that realized that the time had come "for sacrifices, not demands." That he rebuilt France, the figures showed. Gold flooded in. Sales increased. So did production. Unemployment fell off. Ending argument, to what Reynaud accomplished a man above suspicion, the Archbishop of Paris, Cardinal Verdier, paid tribute. Speaking at Lourdes on August twentieth, 1939, he said, in effect, that the French were once again united and also strong again economically. But His Eminence spoke on the eve of war.

The attacks on Reynaud ceased only when war was declared. Nor had they been launched only by the Socialists and the Communists, and by labor leaders, on behalf of the workers. Some of them had come from members of the Radical Socialist party, Daladier's own party, that party of "the little people." As André Siegfried explained, these people "do not want to be governed by the rich," and Reynaud was rich.

His associates were rich. But it would be a mistake to assume that they were members of "the old gang" who had ruled so long in France.

They were the new crowd who had seen war "as inevitable," and suspicion of them made an examination of Reynaud's record as inevitable as war was.

It is a curious record, this story of Reynaud's relation to armaments. After the war that ended in 1918, he had seen something of the German potash king, Arnold Rechberg, who sought an alliance between French and German heavy industry. Both nations were to unite, re-establish the empire of Charlemagne, then turn against Russia. Out of rearming Germany, the French would have made money because a goodly share of this business would have been assigned to French armament makers. However, all this came to nothing, partly because of English opposition, partly because of the attacks made on this scheme in France by such independent journalists as Paul Allard, Francis Delaisi, Jean Galtier-Boissière, and that competent, hard-working investigator of diplomatic and financial activities, Roger Menevée. In the meantime, in Germany the masters of heavy industry there had turned to Hitler, backing him in the hope of reviving business.

This led to rearmament in France. With Tardieu retired, Paul Reynaud became its advocate in the political field. But who was behind him? The advocates of disarmament discovered a devil to their liking in Fritz Mannheimer. Because he was a Jew exiled from Germany, Mannheimer was suspected of wanting war, and he was close to Reynaud.

The story ended tragically. After making a fortune speculating in after-war currencies, Mannheimer became associated with the Mendelssohn Bank, also exiled from Germany. Becoming a Dutch citizen, he established himself in Amsterdam.

There he managed the conversion of France's short-term borrowings abroad, and Reynaud, naturally, was grateful for this reduction of interest. It helped strengthen his reputation as an able

Minister of Finance. Short and stout, pale and puffy, Mannheimer had a country place near Paris that was guarded like a castle. Everything was done in the summer of 1939 to keep secret his marriage there to the young Brazilian beauty, Marie Antoinette Jeanne Reiss. But it was difficult to keep secret the fact that Reynaud acted as best man. Too many eyes were on Reynaud.

The connection between Reynaud and Mannheimer took on sensational proportions presently when Mannheimer died suddenly. Immediately after, his bank failed.

The investigation into this failure was cut short by the war that began September first.

This investigation might well have restored to favor the manufacturers, even the munition makers, in France. After all, they were French.

They were Nationalists, rather than Internationalists. Why had propaganda always been directed against *them*? They were builders and engineers who provided work. Why should *they* be singled out for attack? Men like Louis Renault, the automobile maker, Schneider and the de Wendels, had long since decided to find out why. For several years now, their money had obviously been used to favor a counter-propaganda.

This began to show in papers like *Le Jour* and in other great dailies. Where the new bankers, sometimes called "Reynaud's crowd," had favored politicians like Herriot, and even Blum, this new propaganda favored the point of view of the artists. For the first time, Maurras began to be widely quoted in the popular press. At the same time, in the political field, "the old-timers" of finance threw their strength behind Daladier.

He was French, a Nationalist, not an Internationalist, so they could trust him, but what he was trying to do had to be popularized.

This popularization of the Daladier program among workers was intensified when the war began. Within a week, Daladier put Daniel Serruys in charge of National Economy, and Raoul Dautry in charge of the production of munitions. Both these specialists

were known for their human qualities. While Serruys was an economist, Dautry was a man who went out among his workers and worked with them. Liked because of his kindliness, his simplicity, Dautry got results in short order, as he had for Foch in 1917, and he got them because he was liked as well as respected for his ability. Instead of ordering men to work as Reynaud had seemed to do, he persuaded them, and he was right there in the factory with them. Popularizing such a man, and through him Daladier and his government, was doubly easy because all the forces of propaganda were now in Daladier's hands. Putting the famous diplomat and writer, Jean Giraudoux, in charge of censorship, the Premier took over the radio, too, making propaganda easier to spread.

It had always been formidable in France. While the public believed there were many papers, "in reality," Balzac said, "there is only one." What Balzac meant by this was the Agence Havas.

# V

## Havas and Baschet

THE Havas agency was founded in 1835 and the way it served both finance and government was described by Balzac in the second number of his *Revue Parisienne*. Using carrier pigeons to fly news into France, Havas began distributing to all French papers news from abroad. Because of this service, French papers themselves were spared the expense of maintaining correspondents in foreign capitals. Presently, thanks to Havas, they were to save even more, for, in 1856, this agency branched out.

It began the distribution then of advertisements as well as news. If they could not afford to pay cash for this news, the French papers could pay for it by inserting the advertisements sent them. To this method of barter and exchange, the French publishers took like ducks to water.

"It proved a profitable business," the son of the original Havas remarked to Prince Hohenlohe.

This Havas' successor as director of the agency, a man named Lebey, had another happy idea, that of furnishing the papers with everything from news to opinion, from serial stories to fashion reviews, from caricatures to advertisements, and at a moderate price. With the price the publishers were pleased, but with nothing to do except dig up local news, they soon began to ask how Havas could afford to render so great a service at so small a price.

This question Balzac answered. Because Havas sent all the news to the provinces, the agency's editors could give it the tone they wished. But the relation between the provincial papers and Havas

was such that all the news that came from the provinces was received by Havas and edited by that agency. In order that this news should be handled in a manner satisfactory to the government, the government paid Havas six thousand francs a month. As a result, Balzac concluded, to all intents and purposes there is "only one paper in France," and that paper a government organ. While Balzac railed against this, complaining that "the brightest people in the world were being grossly duped," others took it very calmly.

It seemed to them only natural that the government should underwrite the expenses of a central agency for the distribution of news, and for years it was considered natural that Havas should exchange news with agencies that were owned and controlled by other governments.

This information could always be rewritten with French interests in mind, and to the French this seemed perfectly proper. That the government should take a hand in this game might arouse a Royalist like Balzac, but, after all, why not? What were governments for? As the famous French Foreign Secretary, Aristide Briand, once remarked to me, "Someone has to govern, and affecting opinion is a way of governing."

It is, but it was a mistake to assume, as so many did, that the sway of Havas was entirely undisputed. As papers began to make money, instead of printing the account sent in by Havas, they set up their own news stories. Especially was this true of newspapers in Paris. On the other hand, most of these papers were influenced by the government, and controlled from the same centers as Havas, for Havas, in the course of time, became something more than an agency for the distribution of propaganda.

It became a great business organization, for, when Baron d'Erlanger turned it into a stock company in 1879, he thought of everything. Continuing the flow throughout France of news and opinion pleasing to the government, by organizing and more than ever concentrating this influence d'Erlanger made it possible for Havas to walk in on the ground floor everywhere.

This great organization, its capitalization written up in astronomical terms, now began making more and more a specialty of what is known as "publicity" in France. In France, publicity means advertising, advertisements.

These were of three sorts, official, commercial and financial. What the government, manufacturers and financiers wanted advertised in a certain way, was advertised in that way. At the rates that a subsidy made possible, commercial appeals were spread throughout France, and ideas favorable to certain investments were created by financial advertising. That much of this originated with the bankers and industrialists who were now stockholders in Havas goes without saying. But foreign governments also had certain appeals to make to French public opinion—or to the French investor, to be specific. Before the war of 1914, the Imperial Russian Government had bonds to sell to the French public. With the money so raised, Russia bought armament in France, but later there was a great deal printed as to how newspapers were persuaded to be friendly to this issue. In fact, so much was printed that the French public woke up with a start. Where formerly it had been indifferent, now it began to take an interest in the facts about the press.

The government was one thing, when it came to moulding opinion. But foreign governments? Private business? That was another matter. Feeling warmed up when the Communists made public what they found in the files in Petrograd, by now renamed Leningrad. What the Imperial Ambassador in Paris before the war of 1914, Isvolsky, and the Russian Emperor's financial agent, Raffalovich, had to say was set down in black and white. At the same time it was recalled that before the World War the German Chancellor, Prince Bernhard von Buelow, had mentioned another effort to influence French opinion, made by the Germans.

It has cost "relatively little," he said. But this was hardly the point! What people wanted to know was *why* the press could be affected by domestic and foreign money.

This was explained publicly in 1934. In *Le Populaire*, Blum's paper, the secretary of the Socialist party, Paul Faure, wrote that "for years there has been no free paper, no journalist with the right to express himself freely in a Parisian paper, if he was not in agreement with some dozen or so Staviskys who are in control of journalism." Called to the witness stand by the parliamentary committee investigating the Stavisky scandal, competent authorities explained how that financial adventurer had been able to further the sale of the bonds he forged. Happily, no newspapers of any importance were involved in this. In fact, it was the press that exposed Stavisky.

The truth about the press turned out to be simpler than the suspicious supposed. While experts testified that French papers could not exist without subsidies that came from financial and political interests at home, and sometimes from abroad, this was nothing new under the sun.

The costs of publishing were very great. Naturally, those who could afford to express their opinion "in a big way" founded a paper or bought one. In doing this, however, the de Wendels did what the Blums and Faures did. But they all paid for this directly, where, in Anglo-Saxon countries, papers lived on their advertisers. To say that American and English publishers paid no attention to their advertisers was absurd, defenders of the French press remarked.

Its critics should look to their own glass houses. Didn't Blum's own biographers admit that Blum knew plenty of bankers, and was on as friendly terms with his group as Tardieu was with another? And, if it came to that, who founded Jaurès' paper? Bankers, "outsiders," as an American journalist put it, "anxious to horn in on the big money."

This could not be said of Herriot and Daladier, however, and Daladier denounced conditions, while Herriot denounced certain journalists. Nor was good feeling restored by what the Spanish dictator, Primo de Rivera, and the Greek minister in Paris, Nicolas



Politis, had to say about an afternoon paper. "But what matters is still Havas," the American diplomat, General Charles H. Sherrill, remarked dryly.

It was in Havas that everything else centered, but Havas had its weakness, too. Like the bankers and industrialists, it was seeking a profit. Like the politicians, it wanted to win elections. Like these partners, it saw its welfare as part of a system, the Republic, though this system was not what really mattered. What mattered was France. What everyone really wanted to know was whether the Republic was defending France well.

The real issue was French defense. With the people, this was what counted. Without France as a castle built round it, personal liberty would disappear, so a majority in France, as the threat from Hitler developed, turned more and more for advice to those who had foreseen what Hitler would do, who had protested when Austria was weakened in 1919 and the domination of Prussia over the South German Catholic states preserved. But how these far-seeing men, or in any case their ideas, broke into the more popular, the more widely read papers is a story in itself. Due partly to Daudet, partly to Bailby, and to others as vociferous but less well known, it was due also to Jean Galtier-Boissière. Far to the Left, he was too independent to misrepresent, so he gave not only the Left but the Right a hearing. With intelligent good humor and "a curse on both your houses," he poked holes in every claim.

The truth survived this treatment, but it was René Baschet who stamped the truth with approval, and his approval spoke volumes in France. But he was growing old. In 1939, this dean of French publishers was eighty. For years he had watched the fight in France to determine French policy, especially the fight to control the army. During all these years he had built up the most distinguished publishing business in France. Old now and rich with honors, Baschet, a brother of the distinguished portrait painter, had lived to see thousands come to admire the model plant where he printed his famous weekly, *L'Illustration*.

This example of what a paper should be represented the opposite of what Havas stood for, for in the pages of *L'Illustration* the scales were never tipped in favor of one policy rather than another because that policy happened to suit the ruling clique. Less still was it inclined too definitely, too obviously, in favor of one form of government rather than another. Even as an octogenarian, as a stooping, white-whiskered wisp of a man, far more fond of his country place, his flowers and his garden than of city life, Baschet saw to it personally that his weekly maintained his policy of telling the truth, that truth which represented a mean between extremes.

This truth he stated moderately, with distinction. Opening his columns to men like André Siegfried and to fair-minded and able reporters like Ludovic Naudeau, Baschet saw to it that the facts were stated simply and without undue emphasis. So, on the whole and over a long period, they were presented more convincingly than by those who shouted them. Shouts tend to alarm or antagonize the thoughtful. But Baschet had a reason for speaking softly.

It was never the French people, the populace as a whole, whom he represented in his richly illustrated and printed magazine.

It was the elite, the well-born, well-educated minority whom Baschet felt knew best what was best for France. Along with that independent opinion which Jean Galtier-Boissière defined, this minority represented the balance of power in France, and it was this balance of power that René Baschet affected. Weighing all claims, he gave his final approval only to those advocates who maintained that personal liberty mattered, but that this liberty in turn was dependent on the freedom of France from invasion, for France was liberty's stronghold. So what had Daladier really done to maintain this castle inviolate? What the politicians wanted done? Or what the wise men, the great personalities in the world of thought advised? Baschet had Ludovic Naudeau answer this question in 1939. But Naudeau did more than answer questions.

He made clear the meaning of the French policy toward arms, a meaning the publicist, Girardin, had been the first to obscure.



## *THE PUBLICISTS*

"The Daladier code is excellent, but, alas! it has the irreparable fault of coming twenty years too late, for it takes twenty years to form a man."—

Ludovic Naudeau.



## Policy and Girardin

THE French in the past had had two policies toward arms. One spared men, the other spent them. But neither did away with the need for an army, and this army had to be efficient either in one way or another. Because of France's geographical situation, the French army had to be effective either because of its quality or its quantity.

A prize in the game of international politics, France had five frontiers, the Spanish, Italian, Swiss, German and Belgian borders. Beyond were nations envious of the French, for France was a rich and watered country. Furthermore, as the French birth rate fell, a sixth frontier developed. Communication with the French colonies, with their reserve of men and material, had to be defended now in the Mediterranean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean. Last but not least, in the twentieth century a seventh frontier appeared, the air.

These conditions posed a question that only a dictator could answer quickly enough and forcibly enough to protect France from the many and various threats that surrounded her. But dictators in France were always of two sorts, temporary or permanent.

They were democrats or kings, but their beliefs are a detail.

There is only one way to judge them, by whether or not they created prosperity, for creating prosperity is a government's sole business. But prosperity? To begin with, it depends on freedom from invasion.

It is invasion that matters most to a nation, for it attacks not

only a people's material interest, but their very identity, their pride.

This pride is instinct dressed by education, and instinct has a single purpose. Instinctively, automatically, century after century, men do what makes them safe, and this tendency is both explained and honored by education. At home and in school it is dressed in clothes that fit and are made attractive. In other words, by the way they are brought up, by their education men are taught to argue in favor of what favors them, to believe in it and be proud of it.

This pride is outraged by invasion, for invaders do more than force others to slave for them.

They force them to conform to the invaders' standards. Naturally, the standards that favor a people who come from another environment do not favor the people whose land has been invaded. Environments differ, as peoples do, so invasion presents a major problem, one constantly in the minds of the French from the time of the Romans. While the Romans established order and discipline in Gaul, and, later on, Charlemagne re-established these blessings, disorder set in again.

There were too many chiefs in France after Charlemagne's time, and they fought among themselves. Only the Church made life supportable then. By threatening excommunication, the priests restrained the barons. By holding out the hope of Heaven, they helped the people bear with the raids and rows of the chieftains. But successful as they were in maintaining sanctuary, the Fathers of the Church recognized that they alone were not equal to restoring order in France. So they reinforced the authority of the strongest feudal lord, calling on him to re-establish order. In making Hugh Capet King of France, however, the clergy did more than provide the people with a protector.

They provided protection as well for the immense gifts that a grateful people had made the Church, but the protection afforded people and property was due only partially to the fact that the Kings united the country.

It was due also to the royal policy.

This policy had two parts. To begin with, the Kings concentrated the force of France on the main enemy of France. Secondly, they built this force from the ground up.

The result speaks for itself. Under the Kings, France became the richest, the most prosperous country on earth. Why? According to the advocates of authority, it was because the Kings kept France free, free of invasion, and for one hundred and seventy-seven years, a long period for a country difficult to defend. Sure proof of prosperity was the constantly rising birth rate. Intelligent people never reproduce in this way, it is claimed, unless they are prosperous. But were they free? In any case, they were free from foreign invasion.

This problem the Kings solved intellectually.

It was intelligence led the Kings to concentrate on a specific enemy, on the most powerful neighbor camped on the French frontier.

The failure of the democrats to do this led to six invasions of France in ninety-four years, and the threat of a seventh in 1938 and 1939, after only one hundred and fourteen years of democracy, it is charged. Because they reacted emotionally, instead of intellectually, because they were soft-minded instead of hard-boiled, it is claimed, the democrats saw enemies everywhere. So did the Kings. But the Kings bought off minor enemies in order to concentrate on the main one.

The democrats scattered their attack because to them the main enemy was not a specific nation but an idea, and this idea was in many places. At one time it was monarchy, at another Catholicism. Following the war that ended in 1918, it became known as Fascism, or Totalitarianism. But however its name changed, what never changed was the democrats' attitude.

This was emotional. Born of an emotional conception, a religion, it took forms that ran from Calvinism to Communism. But no hierarchy controlled it, so it came to be dominated by the emotions natural to men. All along it had been primarily a protest against attempts "from above" to control men's emotions. What



Kings and Cardinals considered impossible, men wanted just the same. With the Revolution they asked for equality. With the vote they demanded disarmament. In the name of equality, they invaded other countries. So did the Kings, but the democrats were in turn invaded. Because of disarmament, they were invaded again. But was a doctrine like equality, an actual thing like disarmament, were these entirely responsible for disaster? By no means! While they were partly responsible, students of history agree, they were only partially so.

The responsibility was also Napoleon's, strategists throughout Europe came to believe.

These strategists were found after 1918 not only in France itself, but in England and Germany, and especially in Italy and those outlying countries the welfare of which depended on the policy of the great powers. Naturally, these last were particularly sensitive to any threat from abroad, and, in this respect, Kemal was typical of them. But in other respects he was more qualified to speak, both because of his record and his intelligence, that sense of reality to which his contemporaries paid tribute. Widely recognized as one of the ablest soldiers of modern times, it was Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, for years known as Kemal Pasha, who drove the Greeks out of Asia Minor, and rebuilt Turkey.

A heavy drinker, this hero of the Ottomans who stopped the English at Gallipoli died prematurely. But his liking for brandy was also responsible for the freedom with which he occasionally expressed his feelings. His "ten thousand damns, but I tell you it is true!" was well known to some diplomats, and, as he realized, "What the French Revolution began, Napoleon emphasized. What the first Napoleon did, Napoleon III continued, and their ideas survived them to such an extent that in 1918 Clemenceau did what Napoleon advised" in "The Testament of Saint Helena."

This advice was to leave a united Germany in being, and this Clemenceau did. But he went further.

He also pushed the French army into the background.

This policy was continued, despite Tardieu's protests, until the agreements reached with Hitler at Munich in 1938. Forcing power into Daladier's hands then, the French trusted their destiny to him. But long before this, foreigners had realized the danger. "How do you expect me to side with the French?" the Italian dictator, Mussolini, asked the American diplomat, General Charles H. Sherrill, adding, "Who's to protect me? The French have no army any more." To this same American, Kemal addressed an equally pointed question.

"What enabled the French Kings to create prosperity and protect France with only a small army?" he asked. "Obviously, intelligence!" he answered. "What the French should do," he went on, "is study what the Kings did. From what they did you can deduce why they did it. But there's no use consulting most of these history books. Propaganda has obscured all but the main facts. As Marshal Franchet d'Esperey told you, the propagandists in France spend their time lauding the Republic, though it is plain enough that the Republic has failed to produce men competent to deal with France's main enemy. In less than twenty years French statesmen have lost the fruits of the greatest victory of our time, a record unmatched for incompetence in modern history. And whose fault is it?" With this question, it seems that Kemal Pasha paused, and coughed, fixing General Sherrill with those bloodshot eyes of his. "Pass me that bottle of brandy, will you," he said. "You know whose fault it was," he added, accusingly, "though I had no desire to deny it," the Ambassador assured me.

"It was Napoleon's fault," Kemal went on. "A united Germany was *his* idea, and he and his nephew, with their system that centralized power and chucked the vote at the people, who didn't know what to do with it—with all that tricky stuff those two Corsicans made the Republic what it is. If the French don't know this, and don't know what's the matter, that is the fault of the Emperor, too, for he is responsible for their system of education, a system that has brought them up to reply on fancies rather than facts, and

what education begins in France—like Franchet d'Esperey, you know it—what education begins, the propagandists continue."

"In what way?" I asked General Sherrill.

"Ways, not way," the General answered. "According to Kemal, propagandists in France either mislead people, or divert them."

The first of those to divert them was that founder of modern journalism in France, Emile de Girardin. Born out of wedlock, the son of an aristocrat and the pretty wife of a civil servant who was stationed abroad, in a climate that did not agree with his wife, Girardin was kept out of sight as a youngster, but came to Paris as a young man.

There he met and married Delphine Grey, the poetess, a young woman who was poor but knew everyone worth knowing. As to how well she knew them, history is discreet, but it does refer to the fact that she was a seductive lass, and very good-looking. Loving her ardently, Girardin set out to make money for her, and succeeded. Publishing papers devoted to the formula that people are vain and like to be amused, he made a great success, directing attention away, incidentally but definitely, from what mattered most to France, the effect the Napoleons had had on the man power of France. Others, of course, have called attention to this. But sometimes they forget to mention that what undermined France began before Napoleon.

The attack on men and material, the supplies necessary to that army on which France depended for safety, began with the Revolution. With the Revolution, the royal policy of sparing men, rather than spending them, was reversed. With the Revolution, too, the birth rate fell like a shot, and this assault on man power, and consequently on the production of material, was supplemented by universal conscription. Drafting men wholesale, the Revolution, and then its heir, Napoleon, fed them into the death trap represented by twenty-three years of nearly continual war.

The loss this occasioned compromised his country's future. When this policy was first inaugurated, France had a population

equal to the combined populations of Austria, England and Prussia, and definitely friendly to the French were the Belgians, the German Catholics, the Swiss and the Italians in Piedmont, the district around Turin. While all this was an asset, a victory for French diplomacy, the army had ceased to function effectively. With the Revolution, whole regiments were called on by the propagandists to revolt, and this many of them did. Officers were put to flight, or shot. Others, rather than carry out commands to murder or massacre, quit. So, when the attack from abroad on the Revolution began, it was necessary to improvise an army.

A call for volunteers was followed by conscription, but the recruits were allowed to elect their officers. Dependent on popular favor, the officers could not enforce discipline, and, when finally they faced the enemy, they and their troops fled. Declaring war, then, on all foreigners, the Revolutionary government called for more volunteers. To this appeal, however, there was hardly any response, so, in 1793, a million men were forced into the army by a conscription that respected no one, though bachelors were taken first. Fortified in this way, an army was formed that could afford the sacrifices entailed by mass assault, the only type of warfare untrained armies can attempt successfully.

The reaction to so costly an experiment was soon apparent. Sick of losses and disorder, people turned to Napoleon as to a savior, and because he appealed successfully to their pride, they lost sight of the fact that he used up not only the army, but the country.

The cost of Napoleon to France was appalling. Everyone from the civil to the religious authorities were called on to enforce the draft, but there were no officers to train these recruits. Chiefs knew little more than their men. They impressed them only by personal courage, and it was this, plus artillery, that accounted for Napoleon's victories. But in the end came defeat, Trafalgar, Moscow, Leipzig and Waterloo, disasters that left the French nothing but bills that had to be paid.

These were heavy and hard to meet.

The tall young men had been killed, and thousands of others. Industry was crippled and Napoleon had left the country smaller than he found it. While the restored Kings balanced the budget and kept the enemy out of France, they were to be succeeded in time by Napoleon III, another victim of Voltaire's idea that Austria was more dangerous than Protestant Prussia. Driving the Austrians out of Lombardy, he united Italy, raising up on the right flank of France a potential enemy destined to make common cause with the Germans. Blind to this possibility, the second Emperor sat back while the Prussians put an end to Austrian influence in South Germany by defeating the Austrians at Sadowa.

This accomplished, Bismarck and his King brought the lesser German Catholic states into line, and turned toward Alsace and Lorraine, licking their chops in the Teutonic fashion and so noisily that Napoleon III woke up. Sensing danger, twiddling those twin delights of his Spanish wife, his thumbs, he decided to prepare for war. But he was hampered by conditions that his domestic policy had created.

He had the vote to consider. Knowing how deeply the French resented conscription, the Emperor compromised by accepting Marshal Niel's scheme which was to supplement the ranks of the regular army by calling into being a limited and hastily improvised militia. However, even this aroused objections. Ministers kept assuring the Emperor that it was unnecessary. "Prussia has no reason to make war on France," Jules Simon wrote, while His (very temporary) Majesty's chief adviser, Emile Ollivier, insisted that "the Prussian army is intended only for defense." However, these "whisperers of sweet nothings" did not entirely convince Napoleon.

He still did what he thought was enough. But something was lacking. What? "Obviously, intelligence!" to quote Kemal Pasha again. Certainly men and material were present in plenty. In 1870, when Bismarck took the French unawares and war broke out, the Emperor mobilized 1,900,000 French against 1,300,000 Prussians,

and the French were newly equipped. Ammunition was plentiful. As to big guns, the French had three to every two that the Prussians had. Losses, however, give a different aspect to this story, for, in military matters, as elsewhere, intelligence shows itself by avoiding losses, and in this war the Prussians lost only 165,000 killed and wounded.

The French loss was 280,000, no great toll compared to that exacted by the first Napoleon, but enough to arouse the deep resentment of the French masses. Infuriated even further by the enforced cession of Alsace and Lorraine to the Germans, they were called on, too, to pay an immense indemnity. With the third Napoleon a prisoner, and his beautiful, "liquid fingered" Spanish wife, the Empress Eugénie, in flight, with Thiers acting as dictator in the fallen Emperor's place, the Third French Republic came into being and bought the invaders off. Doing this so quickly that Bismarck was afraid that he had not charged the French enough, the Republic was faced with the task of drilling public opinion.

There was no question what the people wanted. Hating universal conscription, they demanded no more invasions, no more wars. But how to prevent them was a question demanding the frankest, the most intelligent discussion; and this was prevented by Girardin.

It was he who sold the press to the financiers and the politicians.

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## II

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### Daudet and Reaction

THE politicians and financiers soon came to realize that the system of government known as republican had delivered into their hands the centralized control of France put into effect by Napoleon. With the bankers' money and the vote getters' "gift for" what Clemenceau, back from a trip to America, called "gab," they manipulated elections to their liking. But there was one danger that they had to face immediately. Later they had to deal with the independent politician who did not come to the established bankers for funds with which to pay costly election expenses. At the moment they had only the independent press to fear, and publicists like Henri Rochefort.

This fearless man, dipping his pen in acid, concentrated his attention on Napoleon III, but he understood as well that leaders of men are of two types, two kinds. Either they are predominantly men of action, or they are talkers, and a republic suits the talker. Too weak to win approval otherwise than by agreeing with the majority, the talker tends to say what the voter wants to hear. But, when Napoleon III fell, the voters were lacking in experience, though vanity led them to think that they knew enough to govern. Even if they had, they were helpless because the facts were kept from them. No one can form a sound conclusion without knowing the facts, and the facts are never published, at least not at the psychological moment. If any American doubts this, let him ask the President a specific question: Why the dispatches sent to Washing-

ton, or the messages telephoned there, on September twenty-ninth and September thirtieth, 1938, by the American Ambassador in Paris, William C. Bullitt, were not published? If all that is claimed for democracy were true, the American people should have been informed immediately of what Bullitt knew or guessed, and of what he wanted done.

The American people at that moment ran the risk of being involved in a foreign war again, but this sort of thing is never made public. To do so would disturb international relations.

This was the excuse invariably offered if the French found out too late what had been going on behind the scenes. Refused the information that mattered, they were called on, nevertheless, to decide questions of state. But they rarely even guessed the facts. An anodyne had been given them.

The first to undertake this delicate operation was Emile de Girardin. While his enemies said he betrayed "every government with which he ever had any dealings," they admitted that he never betrayed "the cause," the system by which he and his like lived. And "he was a gentleman"! Though he gave the independent press a dose of poison, he appeared at the funeral as a mourner. Like Al Capone, he sent flowers. All this puzzled people. While they suspected the worst, for years they could not understand how Girardin accomplished what he did, and yet his method was simple.

It was to create popular papers and sell them at less than cost.

He made up the difference by selling space to advertisers, and advertisers in France—well, advertisers in France were advertisers in France.

They knew what was good for them. Soon they were telling Girardin what to do, and he could not object because he did not dare increase the price at which he was selling his newspaper to the public. By underselling decent and often distinguished competitors, he had built up a circulation that enabled him to charge high rates for space, and he did not dare risk losing subscribers. Nor



could he afford to say "no" to his advertisers. So he did what they asked, and with all the more alacrity because of his rivals in the publishing business. Bidding for popular writers like Eugene Sue, Alexander Dumas and Victor Hugo, his rivals worried Girardin. But the independent press also suffered from this competition.

It had been able to live for years, and remain honest and independent, because it charged a subscription price of one hundred dollars a year, and so could afford to pay writers whose opinion was worth considering. Now these independent publishers had to meet competition not only from Girardin and his like, but from foreigners as well. Coming to Paris from Bordeaux, two Portuguese Jews, Moise—later Polydore—Millaud, and a friend of his, a former "guest of the state," imprisoned for debt, named Mirès, began attacking the independents in their own field.

These two had begun publishing on a small scale, but they used their papers to further stock schemes, so they prospered financially. Presently, however, Mirès over-reached himself by promising investors a twenty-one percent return on their money, so he was once more taken in hand by the government. As he remarked, "Life has its up and downs." Soon he cried, "*Oi, Oi!*" Alas, alas! By the time Mirès was free to do as he pleased again, Millaud was selling for one cent a newspaper in which people found what have been so happily described as "all the gory details."

This success parted these erstwhile friends and to the coldness between them Dumas *filis* added ice. Growing rich now, the younger Dumas was approached by Mirès. "Now that I am free to help others again, why don't you bring me your money for investment?" the released jailbird asked, only to have Dumas laugh "icily," according to the story told by Eugene de Mirecourt in his *Les Contemporaines*.

"I don't want to make money with you, however much," Dumas answered. "I prefer the little I make elsewhere."

This little was not negligible, for there had grown up by now a smooth-paper press, journals devoted to the wealthier classes, "the

industrial aristocracy." But to say that papers like Villemessant's *Le Figaro* were independent is an exaggeration.

A businessman, Villemessant made it clear that he "was in business to make money," that he was trying to do no more than "give" his "public what it wanted." As for his writers, they were all like friendly puppies in a café, running from table to table, wagging their tails. Like Villemessant himself, they ran about, "agreeing with everyone."

"I have to," he complained, "because I am competing with the salesman who walks like a duck."

This description of his chief competitor called attention to a "perambulatory peculiarity." Big words, those two! They were used by the wealthy American, Anna Gould's, first husband, Boni de Castellane, in an attempt to give ample effect to the way he felt about Arthur Meyer. "Typical, typical of his kind!" Boni would exclaim with delight, watching Meyer walk. Apparently, Meyer did not mind.

He would have "taken" anything from men like the Marquis de Castellane, his contemporaries said.

A snobbish imitator of the elder James Gordon Bennett, with his paper, *Le Gaulois*, Meyer, like Villemessant, appealed to the rich and the socially prominent. Unlike Villemessant, Meyer was a Jew, but he sided against his fellow Jew, Dreyfus, "because his public expected it of him," and, as he added ponderously, "My public, God knows, is important."

This was a mere clipping from the truth. As Meyer knew, the influence of this sort of journalism was relatively slight, and for two reasons. For one thing, to a live race like the French nothing could have been duller than this business of agreeing with everyone. For another, what the public, that larger public of which Meyer's was a part—what *the* public wanted to know was how to avoid conscription and war, those twin "hates" of the people. As Jaurès was to prove, these were what mattered to people, and such publishers as Meyer dodged the question. Facing it, escaping from

the control of the banking clique in Paris, raising money among those who wanted to break that combination, Jean Jaurès won a hearing as an independent politician by telling the people, eloquently and persuasively, how he thought war and conscription could be avoided. At the same time he staged a show that made the show in the papers seem like an imitation of Punch and Judy. For years comedians like Girardin had tickled the vanity of the people, amusing them, diverting their attention from what really mattered. But even morons grow weary of clowns, and the French were far from being morons.

They suspected by now that such as Girardin served only to divert attention from the fact that the privileged were making money out of the Republic. But how? "By selling munitions," Jaurès explained, indicting the great bankers and such industrialists as Schneider and the de Wendels. Going on, he insisted that there was "no need of munitions. What for?" he asked. "The Germans love you."

He insisted that "the German Socialists won't let the Kaiser attack you," and the French believed him.

This former professor knew how to talk, how to conjure up great concepts. Like Bryan in America, he assured the public that if there were any danger of attack, "a million men would leap to arms overnight." What Jaurès forgot, if he ever knew it, was that a million untrained men can make war only in one way. If they want results, they can get them only by a mass, a quantity attack. As it did with Napoleon, this works for a while. But if generals cannot afford to sacrifice thousands, they must use machines, and machines require experts. Experts have to be trained. Furthermore, once trained they demand high pay. Quality in men and material cost money to create, and Jaurès opposed "this spendthrift policy." In order to reinforce his political appeal, he wanted to spend public funds on the people.

They were grateful for this. Moreover, there was plenty to spend. When the Radical Socialists, who were later to make

common cause with Jaurès and the Socialists, came into power, France was rich. For the people, there were funds in abundance. But there was enough for the army, too.

There was no excuse for what Jaurès did. As *Le Temps* duly reported, from 1899 to 1902 expenditures were increased each year an average of forty millions over what had been spent the year before. In 1902, an election year, the jump was forty-seven millions. During the next four years the average yearly increase was forty-six millions, but in 1906, the election year, the augmentation was eighty-six millions. From then on the average annual increase was ninety-eight millions, with a jump to a hundred and eighty millions in 1910, just before the new elections. During the next four years the jump in expenditure over the previous years was four hundred and fifty-three millions, and in May, 1914, Jaurès won the election with his plea for disarmament.

He had seen to it that none of this extra money was allotted to the army, but, in the meantime, there had been a reaction to Jaurès' policy.

It was led by Leon Daudet.

This son of the famous novelist, Alphonse Daudet, had been trained as a publicist on the paper of Edouard Drumont, *La Libre Parole*. As André Siegfried reminded me in 1939, it was Drumont who revived anti-Semitism in France with his book, *La France Juive*, unobtainable soon after its publication.

A swordsman of parts as well as a penman, this tall, bearded man was in the thick of the fight over Dreyfus, but the prejudice that appeared in his book was absent from his paper.

There he showed himself as a polemist who avoided overstatement and violence, faults of which Daudet was later accused. But Daudet, like Drumont, was to be called on by crowds in the streets to acknowledge applause. In part this was due to the tragedy of this fighting six-footer's life. In a mix-up, the reasons for which are obscure, Daudet's fifteen-year-old son, Philippe, lost his life on November twenty-fourth, 1923. Again and again, afterward,

this lad's bereaved father accused the police of being responsible for his young son's death. Describing what happened and why, he printed the name of the officer he charged with murder. Nothing was done about this. What is known definitely is that young Philippe visited the store of a police spy who sold erotic books. Later the boy was found, shot from close to, and dying in a taxicab.

The chauffeur of this cab Daudet was accused of libeling. But he did not stop with chauffeurs. From Poincaré, then Premier, down the line, he accused officials of protecting the guilty. Because of the matrimonial adventures of his wife, Poincaré feared the police, Daudet said, and so brought pressure to bear on the judges in an effort to protect them. Moving to Daudet's aid, Pierre Bertrand, editor of the liberal newspaper, *Le Quotidien*, helped right the balance. But not entirely. Sued by the chauffeur, Bajot, Daudet was found guilty. When the police came to arrest him, however, they had to come with an army.

The headquarters in Paris of the Royalist paper, *L'Action Française*, on the Rue de Rome, near the great railroad station, the Gare Saint Lazare, in Paris—these headquarters had been made into a fort. Acknowledging the applause of the crowd, Daudet came out on a balcony with Maurras. Down below, the Prefect of Police, Jean Chiappe, stepped forward.

"Monsieur Daudet," he cried, "there is no decent Frenchman who would not restore your son to you, if he could. But now we must do our duty. We *must* arrest you, even if we have to attack in force. Monsieur Daudet, I ask you, I call on you, I beg you, to spare the lives, the blood of your fellow Frenchmen."

There was a moment's silence then. Daudet's voice, which had filled great auditoriums with a thundering eloquence, had sunk to a whisper. But it was a mighty instrument, that voice of his.

"I will come down," he said finally. "I will surrender."

A block away, on the Boulevard Haussmann, there were people who swore they heard that whisper. But they did not see Daudet

when he came out of his paper's building on the Rue de Rome, for the police hurried him away to the Santé Prison on the outskirts of Paris. When he had gone, many Royalists insisted that he was still in danger.

They were afraid he would die as the Minister of War, André Maginot, and General Mangin died, suddenly after a dinner. Others scout this imputation. As a foreigner, I must say that it seems to me exaggerated. "But," as the famous French reporter, André Glarner—the French reporter who made a record running the mile in America—remarked to me, "some people would credit *anything!*" A pessimist, this correspondent who was educated in California as well as France? No, but occasionally people's curiosity gave him a headache. "In the meantime," he reminded me, "we were talking about Daudet," and the fact that the Royalists, after letting him go to prison, freed Daudet from the Santé. Willing to die for him, they had allowed him to be imprisoned in order to spare French lives. But they were not, they said, willing to let him die. Telephoning to the superintendent of the jail soon after Daudet went there, a Royalist told the superintendent that he was Sarraut's secretary, then ordered him to release Daudet immediately. When this official telephoned back to the Ministry of the Interior for confirmation, he asked for the Minister himself, for Albert Sarraut.

"Your office has telephoned me to free Daudet," the superintendent said.

"How many times do I have to tell you?" "Sarraut" snapped. But "Sarraut" was not Sarraut.

He was a Royalist impersonating the Minister.

The Royalists had taken over the telephone lines at the Ministry. Set free without knowing why, coming into the street, Daudet beamed on the young Royalists waiting there for him, only to have them hustle him into a cab. Dressed as a priest, he was smuggled across the border, and he was to stay in Belgium until politicians like Herriot, Mandel and Tardieu insisted that he be pardoned. Herriot,

Daudet had always praised as a writer. Mandel and Tardieu were lieutenants of Clemenceau.

They had not forgotten that it was Daudet made Clemenceau possible during the war, after a campaign that began in 1908. Joining with Bainville and Maurras, in the Royalist daily, *L'Action Française*, Daudet had shown that if men were to be spared, not spent, machines, arms must be used, and these required quality in the commanded as well as in the command. "So let's have done with the ideas of Napoleon," he cried, "and call on men, not apes, to rule."

This vigorous language had an effect on people that Bainville and Maurras, with their more distinguished phrasing, failed to reach. More than anywhere else, Daudet's value lay in his ability to popularize his subject, and this he did by calling characters into court. Where they sometimes fail to grasp ideas, people do understand their fellow men. So, laying the great Napoleon by the heels, Daudet went in for personalities. What has been the trouble with Reaction—"let's not be afraid of words"—he insisted, is that it has not been vigorous enough.

He liked that word Reaction, almost as much as he disliked some people.

"We should attack the persons," he declared, "who are responsible for a doctrine."

This he proceeded to do, hauling before the attention of a public, at times outraged, at times amused, all the "ennobled gorillas" of the nineteenth century. Why gorillas? Because their ideas were simian! List them: conscription, a nation in arms; free play for the emotions till they flung whole peoples at one another's throats; in short, wholesale destruction, an ape's idea of amusement. As for Science and Industry, twin pets of the century, what have *they* done but make war more terrible, and encourage false thinking. False thinking Daudet defined as the thinking that led men to destroy instead of conserve. Napoleon, for example! Victor Hugo taught that Napoleon was exceptional.

He was. But Hugo also said that because the Emperor was exceptional, he was not bound by the rules. Because he owed the French no duty, he did as he pleased with the French. Because of false thinking, the French believed in him. Have done with such beliefs before they kill you, Daudet shouted, warning his compatriots that the Republic was heading toward an expenditure even worse than Napoleon's. With the Germans over-arming and the French disarming, this was obvious, but only a few Republicans—that incisive writer, Francis Delaisi, among them—moved to Daudet's support. Undismayed, he stuck to his point. Only when war lent his argument tragic justification did Daudet turn to another subject in the fall of 1914.

The country was full of spies, and Daudet attacked them. Singlehanded, he accounted for forty-three, according to the Minister of War. At the same time he fought propaganda in a campaign that is a part of history. That it was necessary, Poincaré knew. In his memoirs, he tells of Maurras' visit to him, and of how "Maurras' deafness surpassed anything he had imagined." Later, in September, 1916, he called on Maurras and Daudet for help.

It was Maurice Barrès, the famous novelist and nationalist deputy, who acted as intermediary.

"I come from Poincaré," said Barrès, explaining that the President wanted Maurras to denounce in *L'Action Française* the spy, Vigo Almeyreda, whose secret identification number on the list of German spies Daudet had already found and revealed. Along with Bolo Pasha and others, in a paper called *Le Bonnet Rouge* Almeyreda was stirring up rebellion in France. But, Barrès said, speaking of Poincaré and the government, "*on ne peut pas*"—they cannot prosecute Almeyreda directly, he has too powerful friends in high places. What the government could not do, Maurras and Daudet did.

The story is well known and has been often told. Almeyreda arrested and strangled in his cell because he knew too much! The Minister of the Interior, Jean Louis Malvy, forced out of office, to



be tried later by the Senate and convicted! Maurras and Daudet put under surveillance at the request of the powerful former Premier, Joseph Caillaux, whom the two Royalists accused of negotiating secretly with the Germans! Last, Daudet's open letter to Poincaré in the fall of 1917, the letter that brought down the government of Paul Painlevé, the Premier who had announced that there would be no more offensives.

The defeat of the Painlevé government put Clemenceau in power, but it was Daudet who had prepared the way for Clemenceau. Meeting General Mangin in Paris in April, 1917, Daudet agreed with the leader of the counter-attacks at Verdun that only Clemenceau had the force to unite the French behind a drive to victory. Going to Clemenceau then, Daudet gave him all the facts he had collected. But Clemenceau was prevented by the censor from publishing them, so Clemenceau, after warning the censor that he would do so, went to the Senate and spoke, attacking Painlevé who would not make war, and Caillaux who was trying to make peace before a victory had been won. "Thanks partly to Daudet—no, no, largely to Daudet," Clemenceau told me, "I had the facts in hand, proof no one could deny."

The old man, in the twilight of his life, never denied the debt he owed to Daudet, and the facts, the proof, the discoveries Daudet gave him, these he used ruthlessly the moment he became Premier on November seventeenth, 1917. Announcing that he had only one purpose, to make war successfully, Clemenceau ended a long speech to the Deputies by repeating, "*Moi, je fais la guerre!*"

"I make war," he cried, adding, "*et Caillaux est à La Santé!*" and Caillaux is in prison.

This much accomplished, Daudet had achieved his immediate purpose. But it does not define his real importance. What really made Daudet important was his ability to translate the truth into simple terms, for, as Clement Vautel pointed out, the truth is a weapon no one can resist, and the simpler it is the more effective it

is. Summed up, all Daudet told the French was that Napoleon's policy of spending men was killing the French nation.

This was all he really told them, but it was quite enough, for events bore Daudet out. While his paper had only a small circulation, the truth travels quickly by word of mouth, especially when it is beaten out on a drum by a man like Leon Daudet. Thanks to him, slowly but surely others were forced to conform to his point of view. Already one of the great morning newspapers, *L'Echo de Paris*, was on his side. Disgusted by the failure to make General de Castelnau a marshal, because he was a Catholic and a marquis, hence probably Royalist, *L'Echo* began to protest. Soon *Le Matin*, another of the Big Five morning papers, followed suit.

It came out in defense of General Mangin, revealing what Clemenceau had done after the war to this officer, who, more than any other, symbolized a sane conception of what French policy toward arms should be.

### III

## Mangin and *Le Matin*

LE MATIN dotted the "i" in after-war policy by showing what Clemenceau did to Mangin.

This general was the commander who directed the counter-attacks at Verdun, and later, with his troops, broke through the Hindenburg Line. Called "The Butcher" by his political enemies, he was loved by many of his soldiers, and he was determined that everything should be done to prevent invasions in the future. So was Foch. But, as the Marshal knew, any such determination as this had to be captained.

It had to be led. As the Marshal said, "It was not an army that crossed the Alps. It was Hannibal." But in the North there were no Alps, only a river, the Rhine.

The safety of France would have been greatly increased by extending the French frontier to the Left Bank of the Rhine, and creating an independent Rhineland, free of Prussian influence. Expressing this point of view, Foch sent a memorandum to Clemenceau, objecting violently to what the peacemakers were planning. But Foch, in agreement with his Chief of Staff, General Maxime Weygand, did no more than protest.

It was feared that Mangin would act, and what Clemenceau did to prevent this, the General told *Le Matin*, and *Le Matin* printed the facts.

They got a wide hearing. Founded by the same American family that gave its name to Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore,

*Le Matin* was brief, to the point, brightly written. Such a policy appealed to readers with no time for details. If the news required explanation, this was furnished by *Le Matin's* editors, the brilliant Senator, Henry de Jouvenel, and Stéphanne Lauzanne, who had been to America during the war. After the war these two revived that habit of criticizing England that had distinguished *Le Matin's* policy for years. Without question, they were right from the French point of view.

The English were obviously alarmed by the size and quality of the French army. Persuading the American President, Woodrow Wilson, to side with them, they insisted on keeping a united Germany in being, nor would they allow an independent republic to be created in the Rhineland. Only a great French army, however, could have dealt effectively with a united Germany, and to the English such an army represented a threat. But they knew Clemenceau! In Paris as an adviser to the Prime Minister, Lloyd George, Arthur James Balfour explained to friends that the French Premier had "always feared that the army would seize control in France."

"And General Mangin is slated to command that army," one of his hearers reminded Balfour.

The General was then in command of the forces occupying the Rhineland, with headquarters at Mayence, a strategic center of the very first importance. According to a letter sent to President Wilson by General Pershing, in May, 1919, General Mangin had sent Colonel Denvignes, a member of his staff, to consult with the American general, Hunter Liggett, at Coblenz, as to the possibility of an attempt to set up in the Rhineland a republic independent of Germany. General Liggett's objections to this were supported by General Pershing and the President. When Wilson complained that Mangin showed signs of wanting to go beyond his authority, Clemenceau ordered an inquiry, then wrote to Mangin.

He agreed with Mangin that the people in the Rhineland were being oppressed by Prussian civil servants, but insisted that the General maintain an attitude of strict neutrality as between the

people of the Rhineland and the Prussians. Pressure from the Americans and the English, the Premier's inherent fear of the army, all accounted for Clemenceau's attitude. But he also feared Mangin. Already popular, Mangin might have made himself master of France if he had seized the Rhineland and given the French that extra security. That Clemenceau knew this, Mangin learned from Clemenceau himself.

The general was slated to take command of all the Allied troops stationed in Germany in October, 1919. Coming into the Premier's office in Paris, Mangin was asked to sit down.

"How are you?" Clemenceau inquired.

"Well," the General answered, reminding the Premier at once that he had been congratulated by the Allied generals who had written him to say that they had been happy to learn that he was to be made commander-in-chief and that they were to be under his orders. Admitting that this was the soldiers' attitude, Clemenceau explained that other considerations had intervened. In view of these considerations, he went on, it had been decided to relieve both Marshal Fayolle and General Mangin.

"Why?"

"I wanted to tell you," said Clemenceau. "I asked permission to tell you. I couldn't get it. I can't tell you anything."

The General now led up to a dramatic interchange. Reminding the old Premier that he had refused to take over Marshal Franchet d'Esperey's command in the East, "as one doesn't behave that way vis-à-vis an officer of the value of Franchet d'Esperey," Mangin went on to repeat what he and Clemenceau had "agreed to" long before this, namely that "it was indispensable to keep on the Rhine an officer with the reputation for decision and energy" that he, Mangin, had "had the luck to acquire there."

"You agreed with me about this long ago," Mangin went on. "Well, this is more necessary now than ever. Are there grave reasons for changing?"

"I cannot answer you."

"I got up," Mangin told *Le Matin*. "Fixing Clemenceau with my eyes and pointing a finger at him, I said with warmth, 'You? You can't? It's you who say that? So I'm to be strangled by your orders!' Clemenceau, who had tried to get up," Mangin went on, "slumped back in his chair. Sunk, pale, he stammered, 'I can't tell you. I promised I wouldn't tell you.' He sighed deeply, adding, 'and besides, in view of the reputation you made in the war—with an army behind you, what a temptation that would be to play politics.'"

" 'Don't you see,' I replied, 'that you are doing all you can to tempt me to go into politics?'

"This brought him to, and he got up. 'That's one too much,' he cried. 'Are you threatening to play politics?'

" 'No,' I answered coldly. 'I am simply pointing out that you are doing what you can to get me to go into politics. But I won't! I won't because I don't want to. It's too dirty a game.' "

They parted without another word.

There was one man left to whom Mangin could appeal. To learn if it were the President of the Republic to whom Clemenceau had promised to say nothing to Mangin as to the reasons for Mangin's removal, the General went to the Elysée to see Poincaré. But it was all news to Poincaré and not to the President's liking, Mangin told *Le Matin*. Just the same, Poincaré signed the order for Mangin's transfer, though he left no doubt in the minds of his intimates that he felt constrained to do so because of pressure from abroad.

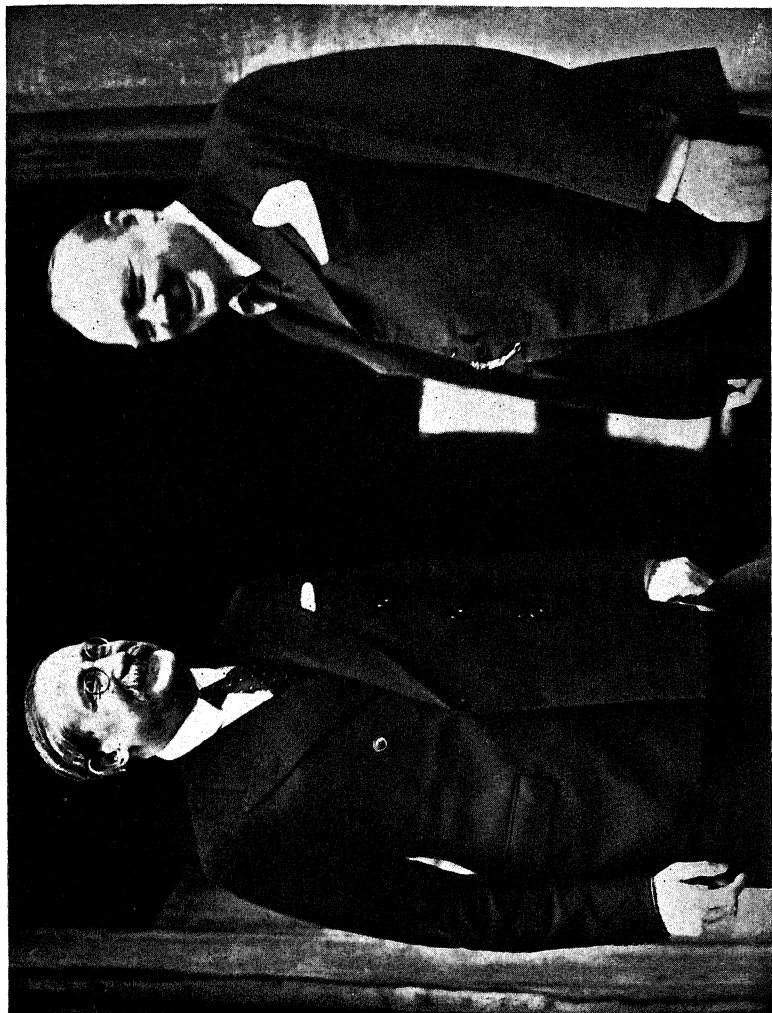
The allies of France feared Mangin quite as much as Clemenceau did. As they knew, as Foch knew, without a Hannibal the French army was unlikely to insist on strengthening the French frontier. But in exchange for this weakening of the army by the removal of Mangin, later to die under mysterious circumstances, Lloyd George and Woodrow Wilson offered to guarantee the frontier allotted the French by the Treaty of Versailles.

This promise led the French to believe that the Americans and

the English would feel and think as they did. Instead, the Americans voted for isolation, the English voted for Germany, and the Germans voted for Hitler. Rebuilt by English and American loans, Germany grew dangerous again, but in respect to this fact the French press took two widely different attitudes. While great morning papers like *L'Echo de Paris* and *Le Matin* protested against the growing French habit of relying on words rather than acts, on the League of Nations rather than the French army, other papers followed Girardin's policy of diverting public attention from what really mattered. Long before this, in 1897, Senator Henry Bérenger, later French Ambassador in Washington, had warned readers of his financial organ that this tendency was dangerous.

"A newspaper," he wrote, "that does not live on scandal, denunciation, or high finance, a newspaper whose writings or whose silence are not both for sale, a newspaper free both of pornography and suspect recommendations for investment, unhappily we know no such papers any more."

This was weeping in order to praise, for the Senator was to associate himself with a paper free of some of the tendencies he deplored, but unfortunately of limited circulation. Meanwhile, the other tendency continued. Weeklies similar to the old *La Fin du Siècle* revived after the war. A taste for the erotic, for scandal, for what the French call *les petits potins*, was amply ministered to, especially by weeklies such as the famous *La Vie Parisienne*, for which the American, Ralph Barton, drew as a young man studying in Paris. Others well known in this field were *Le Sourire*, celebrated for its *petites annonces*, condensed advertisements where pretty ladies wrote with great freedom of their charms and how to make the most of them. *Sans Gêne* filled another need, the desire for short stories, aptly if frankly told, while a weekly called *Detective*, extremely well edited, explained crimes and their motives to a large public. Presently *Voilà* appeared, specializing in pictures, mostly of pretty girls as nearly nude as it is possible to be without being really nude.



*Wide World Photos, Inc.*

The Socialist Premier, Leon Blum, and the British First Lord of the Admiralty,  
Winston Churchill.





This rotogravure "went big," an expert from over the ocean concluded, because its stories, like its pictures, really lost nothing in frankness though they were carefully told.

They were "cleaned up for the act," as vaudeville actors used to express it. Thanks to this "sense of the fitting, they became like a movie caressed by Will Hays," Pearl White told me. "I'm being elegant," she explained, "but you know what I mean." I did. Pictures and papers like these, parents could buy without worrying about the children finding them "when papa and mamma weren't looking," to paraphrase a remark made by the distinguished critic, Camille Mauclair. But even paradise has its borders—that is, the paradise of the traditional Turk. In 1939, Daladier was to deal sharply with all this. But before this happened, the popularization of what so many have a sneaking desire to read or see was carried into afternoon journalism by imitators of Girardin, imitators whose activities provoked the sharpest comment.

The first great afternoon paper in Paris, *L'Intransigeant*, had been free of what André Siegfried described to me as "a deplorable tendency." Presently, however, this paper ran into competition "on the grand scale."

Its main rival was *Paris Soir*. Taken over by Jean Prouvost, a manufacturer from Roubaix in the North, *Paris Soir* was built up till it had one of the largest circulations in France. Prouvost's idea was to concentrate on photographs, on articles by famous journalists like Philippe Barrès and Jules Sauerwein, and on biographies "vulgarized" in the manner of Stefan Zweig's portrait of Marie Antoinette, where the accent was on a love affair—"probably untrue," to quote Leon Daudet—rather than on facts that proved the Queen's eminence. Lastly, Prouvost concentrated on sports.

The treatment given sports in *Paris Soir* drew the public like a magnet, for experts handled them ably. Among others, the young Duc de Chaulnes—whose mother was the American, Theodora Shonts—made his debut in this department. But the tone that colored the paper elsewhere drew sharp comment, leading Prouvost

finally to challenge Maurras whose comment had been almost, though not quite, the sharpest of all. Hero of a hundred duels and now more than seventy, Maurras refused contemptuously. Meanwhile, in the weekly, *Je Suis Partout*, the young controversialist, Robert Brasillach, provoked Prouvost still further. Despite this and a suit for libel in Switzerland against the Catholic paper, *L'Echo Illustré*, *Paris Soir* prospered in France.

Its success was due to the fact that people heard the morning news on the radio. Because of the new laws, they left work early and so had time to read in the evening, the historian, Jean Galtier-Boissière, concluded. But *Paris Soir's* circulation jumped too quickly. Sold at a loss, it could not raise its advertising rates quickly enough. But Prouvost was rich, and he faced little competition.

The ablest of the afternoon editors, Leon Bailby, had gone into the morning field where he made history with a newspaper called *Le Jour*.

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## IV

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### *Le Jour* and Bailby

LE JOUR was important in the sense that a barometer is. Riding on the wave destined to carry Daladier to the top and drown out Blum, Leon Bailby made his paper one of the Big Five when he absorbed *L'Echo de Paris*. But he was already riding the crest of the wave at the time, for he had pursued another policy in respect to French defense than that which had distinguished *L'Echo* and *Le Matin*, to say nothing of the other three members of the Big Five, *Le Petit Parisien*, *Le Journal* and *Le Petit Journal*.

These papers tended to support whatever government was in power on the ground that whatever French policy was, it was their duty to second it. Criticism they left to "journals of opinion," papers created for that purpose. As to the papers devoted mainly to telling the news, these might differ about details, but in one respect they never differed. In one way or another, the Big Five did what Havas did.

They supported the Republic, for, by and large, this policy paid.

A notable example of this fact was *Le Petit Parisien*. Always balanced and fair, this newspaper succeeded in reaching the largest public in France. For a while, it had the largest circulation in the world, but how little it feared competition was shown by the American widow of one of its owners, Madame Paul Dupuy. Formerly Helen Browne of New York, she was allowed to found and publish in *Le Parisien's* plant, a morning daily called *Excelsior*.

Briefly written, using pictures freely, this sheet was distinguished by the suave comment of former ministers like Maurice Colrat,

It was far more outspoken than its older partner, but less widely read. Unlike *Excelsior*, *Le Petit Parisien's* territory was France rather than Paris. At half past five every morning, it began printing editions dated a day ahead. Each one was remade in order to insert news of a nature interesting to the special department toward which it was headed. But this attention to detail was not all that accounted for *Le Petit Parisien's* wide public. In an interview its editor, Elie J. Bois, explained the formula that governed its policy.

"We print a great deal of foreign news," he said, "unlike most French papers. But we give the most space to what is of the most importance. This may be French or foreign politics, or a great catastrophe. But it is not true that we play up crimes in order to divert attention from some scandal likely to embarrass the government."

The suspicion that this was the real reason for the extended space given to crime in the papers had occurred to a number of pessimists at the time that the French Bluebeard, Landru, was arrested for putting women in a furnace. Not only what he had done, but why and how, was described at length. But that this was printed so fully in order to divert attention from some government scandal Elie Bois denied.

"The truth is," the editor of *Le Petit Parisien* explained, "the public itself insists on knowing all 'the gory details,' and we have to give them in full and illustrate them copiously. If we didn't, we would lose circulation. But remember this: if we pay our way by printing these 'details,' that fact leaves us free to print at the same time articles of more serious import. For example, those of Henri Béraud, dealing with Spain, upped our circulation nearly fifty thousand copies a day. Béraud, however, is in a special class.

"An able reporter and a great controversial writer, he treats subjects of 'burning interest.' But when it comes to esthetics or

science, to questions less well understood, it is always a troublesome matter to decide just how much we can safely feed the public. What we don't quite like to do—in fact, we don't do what Villemessant used to do—is to stick a very wicked word in the middle of an article to find out if the writer is being read. If he is, Villemessant found out, there is always a flood of letters calling on the editor to hire a new proof-reader."

It was humor, though not humor of this sort, and cartoons, that accounted for the success of *Le Journal* where fiction always had that faintly erotic tinge that was illustrated by the accounts of off-color trials written by Geo London. But Clement Vautel, *Le Journal's* famous humorist, had a rival in George de la Fourchardière who wrote for *L'Oeuvre*.

This was a partisan paper devoted to defending the interests of the Radical Socialist party, as *Le Quotidien* was. Both had to fight for their lives, however, against the immense power represented by the Big Five and Havas. By whispering pleasantries into the ears of the newsstand owners—these stands were called kiosks in France—the big Five made it difficult for rival sheets to get copies sold. But this loss, in view of the fact that papers were sold at a loss, was less vital than advertising. When Havas, which controlled the placing of contracts, refused to put advertisements in a paper, that paper's difficulties grew, as the wealthy perfumer, François Coty, a disciple of Mussolini, found out the moment he tried to undersell his older rivals. When this handsome and still young Corsican died, moreover, it was obvious at once that his papers were lost without his money behind them. Only one of them, the conservative *Figaro*, continued influential, and this was due largely to its famous editor, Lucien Romier, a broad-minded man and an able publicist.

*Le Quotidien* was bought by the brandy merchant, Hennessy, who was also in politics. Meanwhile, *Le Petit Journal*, which had once made Millaud's fortune, had passed into and out of the hands of the very wealthy Raymond Patenôtre, a relative of the Elversons

of Philadelphia. In its columns, this young man had advocated devaluation. But the war veterans of the Croix de Feu, headed by the Colonel and Comte de la Rocque, made the paper conservative. Even more conservative was *Le Journal*.

This paper was edited from 1936 on by Pierre Guimier, who had quit as director of Havas, after a quarrel with the government headed by Blum. But the precise policy the public was waiting to hear expressed was evident only when *Le Jour* was founded by Bailby.

This little man had luck. "Bossy and fussy" if the critical were to be believed, as a department store clerk he had shown that he knew how to organize and sell, and it was as an executive that he went to the afternoon daily, *L'Intransigeant*, owned by Henri Rochefort, a great journalist, but no businessman. But if Bailby brought sound business methods to *L'Intran*, he learned from Rochefort that it was well to look ahead to the day when strong men would be in power again. For what were weak men doing to France by telling the voters what the voters wanted to hear? Where were "these talkers" leading the French? Possibly because they "were weak themselves, their policy was weak."

It led to disaster. How completely "these talkers" misled the voters, the careers of Herriot and Blum showed, the opposition insisted. Weak men make weak policies, and French policy had been a series of surrenders under Herriot, a series of diplomatic blunders plus the failure to arm under Blum, Bailby kept reminding the public. Forced by these circumstances into accepting the Munich agreements, the French turned from "these talkers" to Daladier "who talked sense." That they would do this, Bailby foresaw.

It was not foresight, however, but luck that provided Bailby with a public.

*L'Intransigeant* had made no headway until the war communiqués began to be issued at three in the afternoon in 1914. With

that, *L'Intran's* circulation leapt, and with it Bailby's reputation for concise and pungent statement. But while he spoke out, he sometimes sacrificed fact to phrasing, as the American Ambassador, Walter Evans Edge, learned. Bailby insisted that "America had not remitted one cent of the debt France owed."

The truth was, the Mellon-Berenger pact cut the debt fifty percent, and Poincaré forced the French Parliament to ratify the accord in order to avoid paying the \$400,000,000 due for the war stocks left in France by the American army. Instead of paying this huge sum, by the new agreement France was called on to make only small semi-annual payments on account.

These were to be credited against the total debt. In the meantime, Bailby had contracted a debt of his own, borrowing from the wealthy wheat trader, Louis-Louis Dreyfus, in order to expand *L'Intransigeant*. Leaving it, after a disagreement with Dreyfus, Bailby founded *Le Jour*.

It limped at first, as *L'Intran* had, but early in 1934 the Stavisky scandal took on proportions that justified great headlines. Stavisky, otherwise known as Alexandre, had escaped trial nineteen times. Obviously, if he had not been out on bail, he could not have sold forged bonds to the public, and he had been aided in selling these bonds by certain politicians. With others he had divided the spoils. But who was really responsible for his freedom? Chautemps' brother-in-law, the Attorney General, George Pressard? Or Pressard's subordinate, Prince? Prince could not answer questions.

He had been found dead on the railroad track near Dijon—a suicide, the police said. But Bailby insisted that Prince had been murdered to keep him from telling what he knew. Public sympathy with this charge explained *Le Jour's* immediate jump in circulation, for the other papers in 1934 took the view of the Chautemps and then the Daladier governments, the conclusion that Prince was a suicide. Within six months, however, Prince was no more than a memory, so Bailby's attitude toward him does not explain



how *Le Jour* kept its many readers. What really explained *Le Jour's* large circulation was Bailby's policy in respect to national defense.

This was supplemented by minor appeals, for *Le Jour* gave full play to everything that made Paris an attractive city to live in. Sports, art and literature, crime and the shows, nothing, no one worth mentioning was neglected by Bailby, least of all those minor personalities who dined at Maxim's, then went on to such cabarets as the Tabarin. But Bailby was little, if at all, fooled by false values.

He was in business to make money, and diplomats sufficiently intelligent to understand his activities realized that he did not create public opinion. Quite the contrary! Public opinion made Bailby, as it does all large-scale publishers. What Bailby did with nervous precision was to relegate values to their proper place. To him a lawyer was a lawyer, not a great mind favoring the public with a point of view. In France, they were never overly important, these lawyers. In court they shouted lustily. But it was the judge who cross-examined, the judge who really influenced the jury if there was one, so such advocates as Maurice Garçon, Vincent de Moro-Giafferro, Joseph Paul-Boncour, Henry Torrès and César Campinchi were important only as they strayed in and out of politics or intrigued behind the scenes.

The same thing was true of those figures of fashion of whom the world heard so much, thanks to the newspapers. But the thanks that the papers owed them was less frequently mentioned. Certainly *Le Jour* owed them a fortune. In the columns of Bailby's paper they were always stars who had a great deal to do with building up and holding circulation, so they deserve examination in connection with any paper as successful as *Le Jour* was. What, then, was their appeal to the public? "Their understanding of how to behave and talk," Percy Philip, the correspondent of the *New York Times* once explained. Watching them pass, the Beau Brummel of Parisian society, André de Fouquières, described them as "a goodly company." "And unique," Paul Reboux, the writer, added.

This explained their success. Where else was there such a possessor of legs and youth as Mistinguett? "Don't go," she once said to me as I was about to leave her dressing room at the Folies Bergère, after fighting with her about how old she was, a question that interested Americans. "Don't go. I like bores. They make me yawn."

The question of her age always annoyed her. Possibly it bored her, too. But she was unique in believing that yawning was the secret of youth.

"It stretches you everywhere, and that is a very good thing," she told me. "As for this child," she added, patting the blonde head of the pretty girl with her, "she does not know that yet."

"This child" wanted to be another Simone Simon or Danielle Darrieux, or better yet a Michele Morgan, a young actress of marked talent who had become a star after being an extra. "But this child here is only fifteen." Turning abruptly to me, "My poor friend," Mistinguett went on, "will you never grow up? You, at your age, to believe all you hear in Paris! Who told you I was sixty? Cecile Sorel? Poor thing, she is too polite to yawn."

The younger actresses, yawns or no yawns, as *Le Jour* and other papers duly recorded, were crowding the older actresses in 1939. But never out of the picture! To be sure, the cinema had produced beauties like Edwige Feuillère, Mireille Balin, a former model often with Tino Rossi at public places, Renée St Cyr, Odette Joyeux and Vivianne Romance, a talented girl who came up from the Tabarin chorus and presently was earning a salary similar in size to those paid male stars like Fernandel, Jean Gabin, Michel Simon and Charles Boyer. But these younger women were forced to mind their "p's and q's" by the stage stars.

"They know their stuff, those older women," Al Woods, the American producer, once remarked to his agent, Irvin Marks, and to me; and the critic and manager, Frederick MacKay, agreed. So did Gilbert Miller.

He was in Paris to buy plays. "But America is sold on youth,"

he sighed. Unlike Americans, Parisians preferred experience, in actresses as elsewhere. But their experienced actresses looked young, and where else in the world, the French newspapers kept asking—where else in the world was there to be found that "perfection within an octave" that Gaby Morlay had, or a voice like Madeleine Reynaud's? Where else in the world were there actresses who could seize and hold effects as Germaine Dermo, Gabrielle Dorziat and Marguerite Moreno could? Enthusiasts asked these questions, but they had good reason to ask them. Sometimes they did not know, however, that the actresses they admired were foreigners. While little Alice Cocea, unfortunate heroine of a naval officer's suicide, had no accent, her fellow Roumanian, "the blonde, effervescent" Elvire Popesco had.

No one played leads quite as she did, critics agreed, opposite such stars as Victor Boucher, André Lefaur and Victor Francen. Off stage, too, she was amusingly explosive, as only a Slav can be, and often absent-minded. Once I asked her about her King, Carol of Roumania, who had been in Paris.

"No, never!" she exclaimed.

"What? Never?" I repeated. "I asked you if you had met him."

"Met him?" she asked. "But of course I've met him," she answered. "I misunderstood your question. French journalists always ask the same question, so I answered without thinking."

It was Popesco who snapped, "I prefer Paris," when she was told that Maurice Chevalier had made (and saved) a fortune in "that dear America."

This comment pleased Parisians, for to them their world was like no other on earth. To them not only their stage stars but all their stars were exceptional. To the true Parisian there was no other aviator quite like Antoine de Saint Exupéry, no tennis players as unusual as Suzanne Lenglen and Jean Borotra, no woman golfer like Simone Thion de la Chaume, whose father held "Indo-Chinese commerce in the hollow of his hand," and as for boxers—"Bon

Dieu, Carpentier!" If that human sledge-hammer, Jack Dempsey, had bested him in the ring, it was George Carpentier's smile that mattered.

"A smile that belied his fist," it made him a social figure.

He was often at Deauville with his pretty daughter, but it was not at resorts that Parisians—"et les Parisiennes"—were seen at their most effective.

It was in Paris, and especially at the races at Auteuil and Longchamp. At these tracks the people who colored Parisian life so variously appeared "clear in the sunlight," as the American correspondent, George W. Hinman Jr., wrote. But when Hinman wrote this, the scene was no longer what it had been.

There had been no need of newspapers, before the war of 1914, to explain who the great French social figures were. Even the rough lads so cheerily described as the *boi polloi* knew the great by sight and name. Along with the Russian Grand Dukes and multimillionaire Americans like James Gordon Bennett and William K. Vanderbilt, the eminent French set a pace, living gaily and gorgeously, and, above all, independently. Indifferent to comment they always were! Who cared how many girls named Kelly—or Kelley—Frank Jay Gould married? Certainly not the smart set! But after 1918 a change came. After the war people began to do things in order to be noticed. But not the old crowd! Masters of how to live, they went on doing things in their own way, as Prince Murat did.

There were foreigners who kept step with him; among the English Lord Derby; among Indians the Maharajah of Kapurthala; among the Spanish the Duke of Alba; among Argentines Martinez de Hoz; and among Americans Ogden Mills, to say nothing of E. Berry Wall. Nothing? Nothing is not enough! As Gilbert White, long-haired, witty, an artist in more than one way, remarked to Dr. Daniel Hally-Smith, Hugh Robinson and the American correspondent, William Bird, "It is impossible to say nothing of E. Berry Wall," erstwhile "King of the Dudes" in New York. For

one thing, at eighty E. Berry Wall was still harder on high hats than anyone else on earth, perhaps because E. Berry Wall liked to sit on them.

"I like to hear them pop," he explained to me.

"That's Berry," Harry Lehr sighed. "Always doing as he pleased. Like Tony Drexel, he has the old-timer's independence. If he wants to sit on a hat he sits on it, regardless of what others think or say. But the ladies, the modern ladies! They are changing all that. Like actresses, they now want favorable notices in the papers. Imagine! Where it never was before, society's game is now played in the press. You'll see, one of these days one of these ladies—perhaps she'll be in business as well as society—will give a circus at home, and invite everyone into her backyard to see it—everyone, including the reporters."

This happened in 1939, though Lehr did not live to see it. But "these ladies" were not always to blame if they did not keep out of the papers as the English did. If they were connected with some charity as Mrs. Henry S. Downe and Mrs. Lewis K. Neff Jr. were, they could not keep out of the papers, and if they were connected with some great charity, as Mrs. William Maclain Freeman was with the Phare de France, they were blessed by the French for their pains. But the "space" they got in the papers tended to give a mistaken impression.

The entertaining done by hostesses as different as Mrs. Raymond McCune and Mrs. Burke Roche, as Lady Decies and Lady Mendl, as Mrs. Louis Bromfield and the Comtesse Adelbert de Chambrun, an authority on Shakespeare as well as Alice Roosevelt Longworth's sister-in-law, as Madame Jacques Balsan, the former Duchess of Marlborough, and Mrs. James W. Corrigan—all this entertaining, like the marriage of the blonde Marguerite Watson to the most popular of the Princes of France, the Duc de Nemours—all this tended to create the feeling that Americans had walked right into the center of French society.

This they rarely did, a circumstance due to indifference, to the

lack of interest the French showed and felt in foreigners, in outsiders. From long experience they had learned that their own civilization suited them and that others had an unhappy habit of trying to convert them to another point of view, one likely to prove costly to the French. Besides, as they said themselves, "What is entertainment? Plate, crystal, gold and silver, food and wine? Hardly! It is conversation," and at this the French had excelled since Caesar's time. So they invited to their parties only those foreigners who had an exceptional wit, men like Harry Lehr and Ralph Barton. To a gifted artist like Barton, to the portrait painter, Durr Freedley, and the architect, Welles Bosworth, all doors were open, as they were to the ambassadors.

The most famous American ambassador was General Horace Porter who received not only the Thanks of Congress but the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor, a decoration also accorded to Myron T. Herrick, who stayed at his post in August, 1914, when France was invaded. But these men were conservatives, and fashions change. In 1939, the ambassador was William C. Bullitt, who had quarreled violently with Woodrow Wilson in 1919 because of the President's failure to further Bullitt's efforts to help Lenin. When he came to Paris as ambassador, however, no one checked Bullitt's hand on the left. Assigning an embassy secretary to the business of keeping close to Blum and his group, he did all he could for that Premier, as several of the dressmaking establishments did. But these were mostly foreign in origin.

Those more definitely French were directed by realists, not enthusiasts anxious to rule the world, and these realists gave callers the impression that they were against Blum because business was falling off.

This affected the newspapers because advertising fell off. Such a drop was quickly registered by the *couture*, for every industry, from silk to buttons, made money because of it. Every businessman in France, who was paying more attention to business than to political diatribes, realized the debt he owed to the artists who made

French dressmaking what it was, and so advertised French production at its best. But who were these artists? The question was often asked. For the most part, they were women.

The brothers Worth aside, and such a naturalized citizen as Elsa Schiaparelli, the more famous were Madeleine Vionnet, Jeanne Lanvin, and Gabrielle Chanel, more familiarly known as Coco.

A gypsy type, this author of her own success was noted also because of the attentions paid her by the Grand Duke Dmitri of Russia and by the Duke of Westminster. But, as the Dean of the American Pro-Cathedral, the Very Reverend Frederick W. Beekman, once remarked, how did this become known? Was it a form of advertising? Perhaps? Fashions, however, were created as much by the women who wore clothes as by those who designed them. Among those who wore them noticeably well were Madame Fabré-Luce, and the Duc Descazes' sister, Daisy, who first married one of the de Broglies and later the Honorable Reginald Fellowes. But from fashionable women to fashionable physicians like Dr. Robert E. Dax, however interesting these people were, however deftly the famous headwaiter, Albert, served them at Maxim's in Paris, however much that master of entertainment, François André, catered to them at his casinos in Cannes, Deauville and La Baule, they were all part of a side show.

This side show got due and often amusing attention in the papers, but the main show was elsewhere, as Bailby realized. As he knew, these diversions that many beside Girardin had played up brilliantly—these diversions concerned the French less closely than what was vital to them. As Bailby sensed from the first, what mattered most to the French was the defense of France. To the French France was home, the home where they were free to be themselves. But if this freedom were to continue, if it were to be saved from encroachments that sneaked into the country in times of peace, or threatened to come with arms—if this freedom were to continue, it had to be defended.

It was in this defense of freedom, of France, that the French

were interested most, however much they might disagree as to how France and freedom should be defended. As to this debatable point, there was room for argument, of course. Bailby's guess was that a majority of the French would turn to Nationalism as the surest form of defense.

He proved right. That tide grew, and *Le Jour* measured its strength. As Bailby foresaw, Blum was washed under, Daladier lifted to the crest of the wave when opinions in France went to war at the time of the Munich crisis. But it was not Bailby who described this battle best.

It was Jean Galtier-Boissière who described better than Bailby did, and who understood, even better perhaps than André Siegfried himself, what the determining force was in French public opinion.



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# V

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## Galtier-Boissière

THE definitions of public opinion in France, of that force that decided every issue in the end, were various during the years that intervened between the peace signed at Versailles and the war that began in 1939. Unquestionably, of them all, that of André Siegfried was the best known abroad.

He divided opinion into two parts, that of "the little people" who believed in democracy, in government "from below," and the opinion that emanated from the Right of a great dividing line. On the Right was Reaction, and Siegfried warned his readers not to be misled. "Many more people stand to the Right of that frontier line than one would suspect at first glance," he wrote in 1939 in the American quarterly review, *Foreign Affairs*.

"The Revolution," he went on, "has never enjoyed unanimous acceptance among us," though "the number who pay it lip service is very great. To pretend acceptance is wise for any candidate at election time."

This was true, but, when he divided opinion into two parts, Siegfried, if I understand him correctly, had in mind only those people who were definitely committed to one of the two great political groups. In respect to these, this distinguished sociologist was undoubtedly well informed, but, as others had realized, there had come to life in France since 1918 a third public opinion.

This held to a certain point of view. Like Lord Balfour, it took account of the fact that "politicians are all more or less what you

call gangsters in America. But the question is not how they get power, but what they do with it," for some are wiser than others. Since a choice has to be made among politicians, it is better to choose the more intelligent.

This many of the French came to realize, for they were no longer the inexperienced voters whom Napoleon III had invested with the suffrage. Whether they were affiliated with a political party or not, they had learned that all men are selfish, whatever men like Herriot and Blum might say in public. But some knew better than others on which side their bread was likely to stay buttered. Some politicians take the long view. So do some voters. Furthermore, as the meaning of disarmament grew more apparent, this type of voter increased in number.

This type of voter, these Frenchmen were everywhere, of course, scattered all over France. Nevertheless, they could be catalogued.

They could be divided into three groups.

There was one group that inclined more or less to the Right, another that tended to the Left, and both these groups were connected, more or less closely, with parties. But they voted as they pleased. Furthermore, there was a third group that was completely independent of any party.

This last group, as elections began to prove, was by far the most numerous. But it differed in no respect that mattered from the other two groups. Whatever their affiliations, however independent they might be, the members of these groups agreed about one thing of the very first importance.

They agreed that the only sane attitude to take toward political parties, whether they were Right or Left, was "a curse on both your houses." Motoring with friends through all parts of France in the years that followed Versailles, I came increasingly on this spirit. Visiting châteaux, with the American architect, William D. Ewart, who had studied at the Beaux Arts, I saw exactly this attitude taken by guides and guardians. Everywhere in France, in cafés where men and women gathered in the evening, we heard the same com-

ment, that "politicians are gangsters, but only some of them are fools. So we must do what we can to strengthen the hands of the bright ones."

This third opinion in France, everywhere evident, constantly increasing, "represented the balance of power at every election," the French High Commissioner and Radical Socialist politician, Henry Franklin-Bouillon, told me. In the end, it gathered behind Daladier. But, before this, in Galtier-Boissière it had found a prophet on the Left, a publicist who proved to be the most interesting historian since Bainville. Where Bainville was cold, intellectually as sure of himself as he was of his facts, this man was warm-hearted. However, while his sympathies were very obviously with those whom Siegfried described as "the little people," he did not let this circumstance affect his judgment.

He told the story fairly, and he told it well, warming his facts with wit and human feeling as Bainville never did. But his personal rows were notorious. In these, Jean Galtier-Boissière treated details rather than general issues, as when he attacked Henri Béraud, of whose first "smoking," the French name for a dinner coat, he made an issue on the ground that "it didn't fit" Béraud in more senses than one. Counter-thrusts Galtier-Boissière dodged gaily.

He had always fought gaily. Born in Paris on December twenty-seventh, 1891, he had taken "honors" in philosophy when he was called into the army, only to found at the front, in August, 1915, "a journal of the trenches" named *Le Crapouillot*. Through this medium he served the soldiers with the sort of blithe satire that made *Le Rire* and *Le Canard enchaîné* famous. After the war he did what no one else had done, making *Le Crapouillot* a monthly review of history, and what history! In its pages Galtier-Boissière set down what everyone whispered, but no one printed.

The result was one of the most amazing records of social history to appear in France since the Duc de Saint Simon's memoirs and Choderlos de Laclos' *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*. As for Galtier-Boissière himself, no one abroad resembled him. In America only

H. L. Mencken did. Though he has been compared to Sinclair Lewis, whom Siegfried could quote by the yard, Galtier-Boissière rarely presented his conclusions in the form of a novel, and what he did write revealed a point of view less like that of Lewis than that of Lewis' predecessor, David Graham Phillips. Like Phillips, Galtier-Boissière ignored the Babbitts. Like Phillips, he preferred to deal with the great engineers who make a country what it is.

It was mostly with them that Galtier-Boissière concerned himself, or with their important allies and enemies, or some consequence of their rule, so, with the years, his carefully kept record of those who ruled France took on an increasing importance, for he had traced, intimately and familiarly, the course of what mattered in French history, of what had gone on behind the scenes. In story after story, for the most part urbanely and often wittily, he showed precisely why so many turned cynical, why there grew up in France a third public opinion. Beginning with two novels after the war, from 1930 on he devoted himself to his *History of the War*, his *History of the Third Republic*, and his *History of the Secret Police*.

This last was translated and published in English, but Galtier-Boissière was to touch a climax in effective presentation when he summed up the debate in the press that preceded the so-called "surrender at Munich." On this summing-up rests his reputation for fairness, for here was a pacifist who had been stingingly critical of the munition makers, here was a man of the Left who faced the truth squarely and told it openly. Outside the conservative monthly reviews, the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, the *Revue de Paris*, the *Mercure de France*, and the *Revue Universelle*, few attempted to do this. Excuses there were in plenty, notably in the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, devoted to André Gide and that dandified stylist's disciples, and in *Esprit* where George Zerapha dealt with the question of character. But excuses Galtier-Boissière avoided in favor of facts.

He began by comparing the press in 1914 with that of 1938. In 1914, the papers pretended that war was not imminent. In 1938,

they exaggerated the danger. But while there was "a war party" and "a peace party," these two parties were made up of a curious company. Whether they were Right or Left had nothing to do with whether they were for peace or war.

This curious circumstance Galtier-Boissière was one of the few publicists in France to explain correctly. While he could not resist his old habit of thumbing his nose at the "merchants of murder" and bankers, he did set down the facts.

"It is undeniable," he wrote, "that the war of '38 was prevented not only by a profound popular movement, but also by the action of certain capitalistic groups." Continuing, he declared, "it happened for once that the policy of certain 'masters of the world' coincided with the most immediate interest of the masses requisitioned for the butchery. Certainly, we are under NO ILLUSION," he exclaimed, breaking into capitals, "as to the reason for this sudden love of peace—a curious thing to find among steel merchants and banknote manipulators. Obviously it was based on fear of defeat and of social disturbances, and also on an undisguised sympathy for the political regime of the adversaries," he concluded, going on to describe "the war party," and its most significant figure.

This was another Sainte Geneviève than the patron saint of Paris. Unlike that illustrious lady, this one unsheathed a pen, not a sword.

## VI

### Sainte Geneviève

THE woman publicist described as Sainte Geneviève—sometimes graciously, sometimes ungraciously—was Geneviève Tabouis, the niece of the two famous French ambassadors, Jules and Paul Cambon. Of her it was written that she could “raise more hell on less information” than anyone else in the business—the newspaper business, not the business of raising hell. Whatever her object, she attracted attention. Mussolini reproached her, if calling a lady a liar and a reproach are the same thing, and Hitler referred to her in a speech. Others who objected to her imaginings were nearer home. As the political commentator of the Radical paper, *L'Oeuvre*, she had enemies even in her own nest.

This woman gave them good reason to protest. Only in the Communist sheets, *Ce Soir* and *Humanité*, suppressed finally in 1939, were her imaginings outdone. One of them was her statement, during the Spanish Revolution, that the Germans had landed twenty thousand men in Spanish Morocco. But she was “to hit” what an American observer described as “a new high” in September, 1938. After announcing a whole series of happenings that did not come true, she reached her climax with the assertion that the British had decided to give the French colony, Madagascar, to Germany. Already her methods had been denounced by the famous humorist, George de la Fourchardière. Writing in the same paper as Sainte Geneviève, he declared sarcastically that it was “to her and not to those idiots, the diplomats, that the chancelleries

address their messages in code." But let us be fair, he went on—"in accordance with the law of probability," some of her prophecies come true, "and in about the same proportion as those of a race track tipster do." As for the British intentions in respect to Madagascar, she was forced to publish a retraction.

Her paper supplemented it by stating flatly that "it was in a position *to know*" that there had never been any question of such a concession, nor would anything of the sort be proposed "during the next trip to Paris of Mr. Chamberlain and Lord Halifax." Emphasizing this, the editor of *L'Oeuvre*, the war veteran, Jean Piot, wrote, "It is to be hoped that French opinion will not allow itself to be troubled by rumors that are born of *pure invention*." Well, why publish them, then? Why let the lady write them? To these questions, diplomats furnished an answer. Behind the scenes, frankness had always been one of their charms, and when it came to Sainte Geneviève, they were engagingly frank—frank, that is, in the manner of one prima donna discussing another.

"We never did take her seriously," a French ambassador told me. "We read her as we do a novel."

This explained her survival, this and the fact that she was a woman, and the further and more important fact that her sensationalism helped build up circulation for her paper. But why was she wrong so often? Was she hard of hearing? Every advantage had always been accorded her, she implied. To judge from her stories, she had been under the table, listening in for years whenever the Ministers met at the Elysée. But this was nothing, of course, mere child's play for a Sainte Geneviève in her own town. It was when it came to the Fascist countries, sealed books for most of the men, that this saintly lady shone—a circumstance that aroused her own sex.

The sort of "news" she enticed out of Fascist hiding places was all embarrassing to the Fascists who seem to have been strangely garrulous where Sainte Geneviève was concerned, and in any case, "this sort of 'news,'" charming ladies protested, "you get only by

climbing on Mussolini's knee, or curling Adolf's mustache, and she never leaves Paris." But whatever her travels may have been, Sainte Geneviève did get stories—colored and prejudiced, perhaps, but stories. That these stories sold papers, there was no question. Some American reporters learned how to make headlines from her, and certainly *L'Oeuvre* kept her on, despite such a striking disavowal as the one I have quoted, because she made money for them. However, there was a difference between the American public and the French. If the French were amused by the antics of Sainte Geneviève, it was because they were close to the scene of her descriptions.

They suspected the truth, not only about what she had to say, but about the motives of publishers. As the French know, publishers are in business to make money. Headlines sell papers. Circulation makes it possible to charge a high rate for advertising, and advertisements mean money in the pocket for the publisher. So, despite the deserved rating that such anarchists as Galtier-Boissière gave her, Sainte Geneviève went her merry, exaggerated way. In addition, even the government was in the business of propaganda to such an extent that Tardieu denounced the supervised radio for spreading "the lies of the state."

This tendency to exaggerate was largely Sainte Geneviève's fault. Because she brought in dividends, men were forced to compete with her for popularity, to write not in their way, but in hers. But what the French would accept with a shrug from a woman, they would not accept from men, so many a reputation went by the board. Disgusted, the editor of a great news agency resigned, saying that he had been compelled by the agency's owner to suppress or alter dispatches. Havas, too, was called to account, for it was charged that Havas was "stuffed with agents of Stalin" whose "love of the Soviets' brand of democracy" led them to color the news. But those who were attacked most on this ground, and who suffered most from attacks of this sort, were individually well-known journalists such as Emile Buré, Henri de Kerillis, and André Geraud,



Better known by his pseudonym, Pertinax. During the war of 1914, Geraud had made a reputation as the political critic of the Catholic paper, *L'Echo de Paris*, now combined with *Le Jour*. De Kerillis was a former soldier, with a brave record as an aviator. Excitable and emotional, he was friendly to Englishmen like Anthony Eden, and to certain bankers. His paper had been recommended by Louis-Louis Dreyfus, who, naturally, felt a deep interest in his fellow Jews, exiled from Germany. As for Buré, for years he had been an able pleader for special causes. But these men were all called propagandists mainly because they favored an alliance with Soviet Russia.

They "outdid Tabouis," it was alleged. Following the trail blazed by the saintly lady, they ran into an opposition that grew distressingly personal and specific in September, 1938. During that battle of opinion that centered around the Munich agreements, only a few stayed even relatively calm.

These few included Galtier-Boissière. Sympathetic with the Left, he maintained his independence, nevertheless. He stuck to the facts.

These showed that the attempt of the Soviet-sympathizers, and their Communist allies, to force France into war in 1938, reached proportions never surpassed by the munition makers at their worst.

"It would have been folly" to fight then, Daladier said later. France was unprepared. So was England, which meant that the French would have to fill in for the British while the Empire prepared an army, a prospect the Premier did not relish. After the crisis had passed, moreover, he kept this possibility in mind, and while he was waiting for London to decree conscription, he called the war mongers to time in France, threatening them with action if they did not stop spreading "false reports" and writing sensational headlines that the facts did not justify. But he owed these war mongers a debt.

They had made him a dictator.

They had made it clear to that third body of opinion in France,

to those independents who had sold their sense or soul to no political party, that the Left could be trusted as little as the Right. Hence Daladier! Whatever his faults, the independents trusted him more than they trusted anyone else whom it was possible to put in power and keep there. But why were "the hired hands of the Soviets" so hysterical, so determined to fling millions of Frenchmen against the Siegfried Line and Italy? Many asked this question.

The answer is simple enough.

An analysis by the well-informed of Sainte Geneviève's copy, and the debating power of such a man as de Kerillis, revealed exactly why. Such propagandists are done for, finished, if they have to face informed readers and prove their case. So, instead of proving their case, they concealed it by an emotional appeal.

This is the oldest trick known to propaganda. Arouse hatred and you blind the mind. "But to do this successfully," one analyst wrote, "the propagandists in France had to have an uninformed crowd to deal with, for appeals to hate, to emotion, to fear, affect the uninformed, the masses far more" than those who know or sense the facts. So, if the Sainte Genevièves were to dominate, the masses must be allowed to rule. Wanting a market for their ability to arouse hate, fear, the emotions, these propagandists opposed Daladier for fear he would mark down the price of their product. Needing a crowd to work on, they favored government "from below" rather than the rule "from above" that Daladier was beginning to represent. In the end, however, their appeal fell flat.

It missed its mark partly because its proponents seemed more intent on saving Czecho-Slovakia than France. In addition, no one had anything to gain from a war except the Soviets, many reasoned. That the Russians themselves felt that war would bring on a world revolution favorable to them was obvious from their actions. In September, 1938, they kept hurrying 'planes into the fields near Prague, as Henri Pozzi proved, and others admitted.

"We have two thousand 'planes there, ready to blow Berlin off the map," said the Communist who so long represented a great

London paper in Paris. Other representatives of powerful English papers were cheered by this information, too. But it did not move the French. To crash through the Sarre salient toward Munich meant the sacrifice of half a million French lives. Gamelin, the commanding French general, was quoted to this effect, and to the contrary. While he denied that he had said anything—for publication, that is—experts put the cost of a drive through the Sarre at the figure I have given. In the meantime, the English, counseled by Runciman, had decided that the Sudeten Germans should return to Germany. Simultaneously, in the South of France, eighty-year-old Leon Garibaldi began a significant campaign in his paper, *L'Eclaireur de Nice*.

It was to spread through France, this elderly editor's reminder that the Czech President, Benes, had failed to keep his promise to establish a federal state where minorities would have their say as they had in Switzerland. Why had he made this promise? Because at the Peace Conference he had been forced to admit to Wilson and Lloyd George that the Sudetens would vote to stay out of the Czecho-Slovak union. With sharp sarcasm, Garibaldi also reminded the French that Benes' predecessor, old Masaryk, too, had promised equal treatment for all peoples represented in Czecho-Slovakia, only to say later that his promise was signed in Pittsburgh on a Sunday, a day when signatures are not valid in the United States.

This lessened sympathy for the Czech government. With Sir John Simon stating in the House of Commons that Czecho-Slovakia "had been created in defiance of the principle of the self-determination of peoples," Stéphane Lauzanne began in *Le Matin* a series of reminders. By agreements reached in 1924 and 1925 France had pledged herself to come to Czecho-Slovakia's rescue in case of unprovoked aggression, but only in accordance with the terms of the Locarno Treaty, and only after consultation with the League of Nations and in conformity with the Covenant.

These guarantees had lapsed. Damning Clemenceau, Lloyd

George and Wilson, for insisting on plebiscites everywhere but in Czecho-Slovakia, Lauzanne swung into line with the peace party. Already Bailby had made his opinion clear in *Le Jour*, that France should not fight until she was ready to fight.

This sounded a note that convinced the public, and for a profound reason. Making up the peace press were all the Left papers, the Communists excepted, and most of the great dailies, with Saint-Brice and the humorist, Clement Vautel, sounding off to marked effect in *Le Journal*, while Lucien Bourguès struck a milder note in *Le Petit Parisien*. Also fighting on this front were all the papers on the Right, with the exception of de Kerillis' organ, *L'Epoque*. What mattered in this appeal, however, was not those who made it, but the fact that they put France first. Obviously, it would cost France dear to fight, and what mattered was France. A remote country in Central Europe that had kept up a constant quarrel with its neighbors meant nothing to France unless it could prove its value to France. So the Internationalism of the Soviets, a policy that was using Czecho-Slovakia, foundered in France. From the first it had risked defeat by alarming the French love of the homeland, by arousing French Nationalism, and it was done for from the moment that Hitler offered to dicker.

This offer lessened tension and strengthened at once the claims of the advocates of peace. Among many, one comment was typical. If the Sudetens wished to be German again, that was their affair, Clement Vautel wrote in *Le Journal*, echoing majority sentiment. So what if the Sudeten territory were ceded to Germany? Possibly peace would come of that. In the meantime, there was no peace in France. All that could be safely said was that the "peace" reached at Munich in September, 1938, when Hitler was given the Sudeten territory, was being opposed in France by a rapidly shrinking minority, one so small that Daladier felt safe in refusing further support from the Communists.

They had backed Blum and Daladier, but now they were busy deriding the claim of the British Prime Minister, Neville Chamber-

lain, that "this means peace for our generation," so Daladier denounced these Communists and broke the general strike they undertook as "a protest against Munich."

This fight cut deep, so deep that scars refused to heal.

It had been replete with incidents also, of which two were typical. For one thing, it was reported that the American Ambassador, William C. Bullitt, had been close to Daladier during all this. Visiting him constantly, he had given him advice, a dangerous thing for an Ambassador to do, if he did it. For another, the *Action Française* had been seized for printing a parody of the *Internationale*, saying that Blum, Mandel and Reynaud should be the first to die if they forced war on France. Naturally, this suggestion did not please these statesmen and the Minister of the Interior, Albert Sarraut, confiscated the Royalist paper that day. As for the American Ambassador—but what of the Ambassador? What of this "high-hatted millionaire," this "adviser to more governments than one, who tiptoed around Europe for years before he was sent first to Moscow, then to Paris" as representative of the American President? Had he gone too far? Many thought so, but the wish, I fear, fathered the thought.

They could never prove what they suspected. To begin with, what they suspected was that Bullitt some time before this had told the French that with war a Fascist dictatorship would take over American lives and property completely. At the time, it was not known generally that this plan was being hatched in Washington, and Fascist was an unpleasant word to apply to a dictatorship intended to defend America. But that was not all the French had been told about it.

This plan contemplated raising a very large army, one that America did not need if America were going to limit military activities solely to the defense of the American mainland. But how did the French learn of this plan long before Americans did? From whom could they have learned it, except from a man close to those in power in America, and who was closer than Bullitt? No one,

admittedly! But Bullitt's long career had aroused a certain type of unfriendliness. Certain financiers, like certain politicians, favored the Left, so Bullitt's personal wealth did not prove that he was conservative, nor even that he was moderate. What, then, did explain his position? For the most part, his critics insisted that the Ambassador's real viewpoint could be deduced from the fact that he had quarreled with Woodrow Wilson over what should be done to help Russia and Lenin.

It could be explained also by Bullitt's marriage to the widow of the American revolutionist, John Reed. Born Louise Bryant, this lady was a brilliant and a charming woman, but at no time did she make a secret of her devotion to the precepts of Lenin and Trotsky.

This led many to suspect that the Ambassador shared her preference, that he preferred to parliamentary methods a dictatorship, a dictatorship that would be described as a dictatorship of the proletariat for purposes of propaganda, but one that would permit those in the seats of power, as trustees for the people, to profit enormously from their control of national economy and finance. To this control many, both on the Right and the Left, were opposed, and because of their opposition they singled out Bullitt for attack. Their chance to stab hard came when a caller at the American embassy stated that he had learned from "an unquestionable source" that the Germans had spent ten million dollars in France in an effort to keep France from making war. Naturally, it was assumed that the Ambassador himself had told his caller this, and that he had also told the American authorities. Later the embassy issued a statement denying this.

The matter was important because of the deluge of "false news" that flooded France during "the terrible month" of September, 1938. Some of it was undoubtedly doctored in an effort to influence opinion, a doctored of the facts that was denounced by *Le Matin* and other papers opposed to this practice. But much of it got under way as the story about Bullitt did. Whispers married suspicions. Enthusiasm did the rest.

This enthusiasm worked both ways, however. If the Germans were charged with spending a large sum of money to strengthen the peace party, if national money had figured in all this, so had international money, it was charged by the former Communist, Jacques Doriot, and by others. International money, that of the Soviets and that of certain bankers, it was alleged, had financed the campaign to persuade the French to fight. Facts, figures, and documents were published in support of this charge by the widely read weekly, *Gringoire*. But the sharpest stenciling of all outlined the fight among the Jews. Happily for them, it showed that they were by no means all for war.

This was made obvious when an especially prejudiced writer, Julien Benda, was called to time by his fellow Jew, the well-known editor, Emmanuel Berl, who wrote with acid emphasis, "I have already observed in M. Benda that curious incapacity to conceive war otherwise than as an activity engaged in *by others*." Quoting this, Galtier-Boissière put the two last words in italics. At the same time he reminded his readers that Benda had once written that he managed to have a good time among the rich, knowing that he could "have them shot in case of a Revolution." Dismissing this curious prophet with a contemptuous wave of the hand, the editor of *Le Crapouillot* gave his full attention to those who were attacking the Jews.

These attacks were to be found in the widely read Royalist weekly, *Candide*, in the Fascist weekly, *Gringoire*, in such minor publications as *La France Enchaînée*, *Le Delf*, *Choc*, and, above all, in *Je Suis Partout*. Edited by Pierre Gaxotte, the historian of Louis XV and the French Revolution and a disciple of Daudet far more than of Maurras, *Je Suis Partout* printed such a series of articles and cartoons that the government interfered the following spring. So many people read Gaxotte that he had become a danger. As a result the government made it a criminal offense to incite hatred against members of a particular race or religion, whether they were citizens or immigrants. What is more, the government enforced

this law, condemning the editor of *La France Enchaînée*, Darquier de Pellepoix, to jail.

The sentence could not be carried out because the condemned man was at the front, commanding his battery. So was most of Gaxotte's staff on *Je Suis Partout*. Known to be ill even at the time of the Munich agreements, in 1939 Gaxotte could not go to the front. But at home he continued to fight for France.

He would have been more effective there if he had been less prejudiced, however. Blaming much of the war scare on the Jews, he lessened the force of his argument.

"He showed extraordinary courage in attacking them, nevertheless," his friends insisted, "for eighty percent of the French press is in the hands of the Jews, and it is perilous to attack them." But "that is not the point, even granting that it is true," a foreigner protested. "What is important is to get the facts as exactly as possible, and here Gaxotte's anti-Semitism handicaps him only too obviously."

It blinded him to the fact that the Jews were divided among themselves as to whether there should be peace or war, and this fact should have been stated fairly. An able historian, if he had been dealing with the Kings or the Revolution, Gaxotte would have traced every indication to its sure source. On the other hand, it was absurd to insist, as some did, that any side issue, Jewish or Gentile, mattered more than the French did.

It was the French made France, so "what concerns us most," as Emmanuel Berl wrote, "is the defense of French civilization, that heritage from Greece and Rome." Happily for his reputation, it was with this that Gaxotte was primarily occupied. As he knew, no civilization can flourish or even survive unless its defense is made a first consideration, and for years the politicians had been defending parties instead of France. With what result? By now the result was obvious.

The facts stood clear, the facts to which Kemal Pasha, in private conversations, had once directed attention in profanely vigorous



language. But Kemal had not lived to see his prophecies born out. Gaxotte had, and as a patriot, he protested.

"Is there a Frenchman still left," he demanded furiously, "to defend a regime which, only twenty years after a military victory without precedent in history, has again placed us in a situation where we have to fear anew for our lives, our homes, and our liberty?" Having recovered his breath, he admitted that "France has to protect herself against Pan-Germanism. This is one of the conditions of her existence. But she will succeed in doing so only by a double revolution: *first*, by changing the regime; *second*, by changing our foreign policy, which henceforth should be based on London, Rome and Burgos, no longer on Moscow and Prague."

This vigorous comment was widely repeated. Taken up by those independents who realized that "all politicians are gangsters, but some are brighter than others," it invaded even party councils. But it did so mostly because it was reinforced by the facts.

There was no escaping them.

The fruits of "the greatest victory ever won on earth" had been entrusted to politicians for safe-keeping, and in twenty years these politicians, by a series of masterly moves, had pulled defeat from the very jaws of victory. But did they have no excuse to offer? Certainly! When accused, they replied that it was not their fault.

It was Hitler's, they insisted, but an enraged chorus reminded them that this was no excuse.

The other fellow always exists, always takes advantage of your errors, if you let him. For years, Emile Faguet, the historian, had reminded the French of this. For years he kept saying: *Stop* thinking in terms of your individual interest! Be *unselfish* enough to put your country first, but be *selfish* where your country is concerned, for patriotism is "a necessity as long as there remain other peoples among whom it has not gone out of fashion." With this in mind, what was to be said of Briand with his reiterated "put away your cannon and machine guns," of Herriot, of his surrenders and his faith in Russia, and of Blum who had made an enemy of the very

man, Mussolini, who had kept Hitler from seizing Austria in 1934 by moving one hundred thousand Italian soldiers into the Brenner pass? Obviously, there was plenty to be said.

It was said with unprecedented bitterness. Finally, recovering from a national earache, it occurred to the French to do something, too—to act as well as talk. Recalling that Clemenceau had predicted in 1929 that there would be "war in ten years" because German armaments were no longer being checked, people turned to Daladier. But was he another Clemenceau? Arriving in Paris from Munich on a sunny afternoon, he did not look it.

This "civilian Napoleon" seemed strangely embarrassed by the applause of the crowd. But he had read history, and soon it was known he would not disarm. Beyond this only one thing was sure.

It was certain that Napoleon's policy of spending men had come to an end at last.

The idea of sacrificing crowds of men, insufficiently trained to fight in any way except by mass assault, had been pushed aside, thrown into the discard by majority opinion. But when the French government refused to consider "hurrying through the Sarre at no matter what cost," in order to save the Czechs, it had done far more than rebury Napoleon.

It had given renewed expression to the sole idea that ever dominates a people which has outgrown its childhood, the idea that what matters most is the nation. Within the nation, true enough, there are only a few whom the people can trust. But outside it, there is no one. So when the government in Paris decided that what mattered was not the Czechs, but the French, it was on sound ground. What helped it stay there was public opinion. In France others beside Daladier had recalled their history.

They had remembered that in the past the French had had two policies toward arms. If one spent men, the other spared them, and produced them.

This policy of sparing men and producing them the French monarchy had pursued successfully for years.

## VII

### Natality and Naudeau

THE royal policy toward arms was based on first principles. Realistic to a degree, it took into account the fundamental fact that men are the product of their origins, their environment and their education, and that men, and only men, make nations what they are. Happily, French origins were healthy. But they were various! Seventeen different races had to be channeled into a single Gallic stream.

This was done by education.

The system of education fostered by the Kings had a single object, to fashion a united race intent on creating prosperity—prosperity in France, that is. One of the peculiarities of the Kings was that they minded their own business.

This paid. When Louis XVI died, France's competitors, in every sense, were far in the rear. But however competent French education, based on the family, the Church, the guilds and local self-government, with the Kings as national managers—however competent these influences proved in determining French character, a force stronger than all of them faced the Kings and the French with an unending problem.

This force was the environment of the French. Rich the country had always been. Easily invaded, it was a temptation to its neighbors, and neighbors always exist.

It is always worth their while to take advantage of the mistakes made in a wealthy country like France. But to do away with the

deplorable tendency of others to seek their own ends would involve abolishing human nature, a thing impossible to do, and one the Kings never attempted. Instead, they did what was possible. Considering the problem of France intellectually rather than emotionally, they prepared to solve it, and they prepared from the ground up. As dictators, they could do this efficiently, so they did far more than create an army, the policy of which was to spare men, not spend them.

They piped into the army as the spearpoint of defense every possible reinforcement, for an army is nothing unless it is backed up in every conceivable way. While these ways are various, they can be narrowed down to a single point. At the beginning of the whole question of reinforcement there is only one thing that matters, for everything that makes for health and wealth in a country is centered in the birth rate. From the birth rate everything else stems. Obviously, the birth rate accounts for the men who are available for service in the army, but it accounts as well for production, and so for the money, the food on which defense and armies feed.

Its value, however, depends only to an extent on quantity. If the birth rate lacks quality, it becomes more a problem than an aid.

This the Kings realized. Without attempting to restrict the birth rate, the Kings tried to qualify it, using as agencies for these purposes the family and the Church, the guilds and local government. By foregoing inheritance taxes and preserving estates intact in the hands of the eldest son when the father died, and making him a trustee responsible for the whole family's welfare, the Kings kept families together and secure. Secure, they reproduced normally. Contraceptives were unknown, abortion little practiced. In addition, the Church considered the family the center and nucleus of well-being, condemning as a sin any attempt to reduce the birth rate. So, with one thing and another, including the fear of hell, the birth rate mounted. But this quantity presented a problem all its own.

This problem the Church met. Because men are born hungry

and fearful, they have to be committed to certain standards, otherwise they run riot. What the Church taught was the value of co-operation. The weak needed the strong, but the strong should protect the weak. If the brave gave their lives for their country, the industrious should work to build up prosperity.

This was done by the guilds. In the guilds there was government from above; quality ruled, and for a sound reason.

A small country, France was over-populated, so there was great competition. Earning a living was difficult. In consequence, labor was only too willing to co-operate with intelligent management, with experts who got results. That this was anything but slavery, however, was shown by the way the French ruled their own towns and provinces. If they left national and international affairs to the King, it was because they had learned from experience that only a King had ever proved equal to protecting France from invasion. Whenever the royal power weakened, France was invaded as it was after Louis XVI was beheaded. How, then, do sound historians account for the fact that this Louis was dethroned? As Taine records, citing the records, there was national rejoicing when this King was crowned. When his son, the Dauphin, was born, there was rejoicing everywhere, for what this meant was that there was an heir to the throne, that there would be no fight over the succession, that the royal policy that had made France rich would continue without interruption. To the French this policy meant one thing and only one: freedom from invasion. On that cornerstone and no other, the Kings had built prosperity, and creating prosperity is the business of governments, so the Kings are to be judged by the prosperity they created. But it was not the Kings alone who worked this miracle. French education did far more than regiment the masses.

It produced great ministers and diplomats as well as soldiers and engineers, men of brains and men of action whom the King called into council. For every Oliver there was a Roland, for every

Louvois, a Vauban. But the French paid a high price for this system that produced men who knew how to repel invasion.

This system limited personal liberty. Because of the family men could not roam about as they pleased, because of the guilds they could not work where they liked, because of the Church they had to live up to certain recognized moral standards. Notably, there was no divorce. That freedom that did exist to a marked degree, local self-government, the Revolution abolished.

The Revolution had been brought to a head by paid agitators. Promised land as a result of it, people found they had to buy this land from profiteering bankers. That revolt against Louis XVI, against his weakness and the system that reined men in, came soon enough to that usury condemned by every major philosophy, including that of the Church. Gorgeously as they had fought, the French people were robbed in the end. Free they undoubtedly were now of the old restrictions, but they were "free," as Jaurès said, "to starve."

This they realized more and more as the twentieth century advanced, but those who sought to capitalize this feeling of theirs made mistakes. Led by Jaurès, the French voted for disarmament, and so brought on war. Led by Blum, they had won temporary benefits only to have them sucked dry by devaluation, and, like Jaurès, Blum made war possible again by tempting the Germans with an unprepared France.

This made another invasion possible, the seventh in one hundred and fifteen years of democracy. Nor was invasion all! Under the Third Republic there had been a constantly falling birth rate, and a constantly unfavorable balance of trade. Who would remedy this? Betrayed by their leaders in the past, who could the people trust as once they had trusted the King? Daladier? Perhaps! Still poor, untouched by scandal, determined, he inspired more confidence than others, but, as Herriot reminded the French, speaking at Versailles in the summer of 1939, the Kings had set a standard.

This standard Daladier had to live up to, and, there is no question about it, he did his best.

He tried. Beginning with the army, keeping the royal policy in mind, he came to the birth rate. What he did about this was important, but it had one unavoidable weakness, a weakness revealed in *L'Illustration*, at Baschet's behest, by Ludovic Naudeau, the publicist whom the distinguished American correspondent, Arno Dosch-Fleuret, once called "the ablest reporter in France."

"The code of the family," Naudeau wrote in *L'Illustration* on August twelfth, 1939, "will mark a date in the history of France," because it recognizes that fathers and mothers have special rights. Individuals, he went on, owe children, or money, to the nation, and the money of those who have no children should be used to help educate the children of others. During the two years that ran from January, 1929, to January, 1931, Naudeau had written extensively about the whole question of natality, but throughout France he had met with a cold reception. Only in 1939 did the French begin to realize that they were in mortal danger because of the falling birth rate, that "they were not free" to do as they pleased.

They had to do as their neighbors did, or succumb, and Germany and Italy were building up hungry populations by increasing the German and Italian birth rates. If people were reasonable, they would all keep populations within reasonable limits, and so be able to educate and feed them. But people were not reasonable. Using increasing natality as an excuse for demanding room, Hitler and Mussolini made their purposes clear, purposes that the great French personalities "had known for a long time, but which our politicians" disguised for those "electoral reasons which they made their first concern." Damning them for this, Naudeau pointed to what the Germans had done.

The Germans began long before Daladier did.

They started by "wiping out every trace of that terrible corruption, of those sexual aberrations and of those nudist exhibitions which, under the Weimar government, gave the whole coun-

try such a strange character." Having said this, Naudeau reminded his readers that in Germany the unhealthy had been prevented from reproducing, drinking and eating had been cut down till the Germans grew slender and strong again. German women had been "brought back to those habits of modesty and simplicity which redirected them toward their natural destiny." What a shame, Naudeau cried, that all this should have to be done in order to make war! Such a threat had to be met.

It forced the French to unite for their own protection. Thanks to Hitler, individuals no longer counted in France, only France as a whole. Emphasizing this fact, Naudeau raised an alarming question. As he said, "the Daladier code is excellent, but, alas! it has the irreparable fault of coming twenty years too late, for it takes twenty years to form a man." Without men in great numbers reinforcing production and the army, without quantity, what could be done? Only quality, only intelligence could answer that question, but intelligence is rare.

The only substitute for it is experience, and the education that treasures the lessons of experience. Had the army profited from them, the French asked, when the war began in 1939. What were soldiers taught? To put making money and winning elections first? "Thank God, no!" many Frenchmen exclaimed. As the men went into the army and the women prayed in the churches, the French recalled with thanksgiving that the generals and admirals, the soldiers and sailors of France had been taught to make the defense of France a first consideration.

This no one doubted. But *how* would the generals defend France? *What* would the fighters do? Would they follow the royal policy or Napoleon's, the example set by Foch or that of Pétain? Would they spend men, or spare them? Thanks to the censorship, few really knew. All the public really knew was that the army admired Pétain.

He symbolized the army, but he also stood for the past, and the past foreshadows the future.





## *THE FIGHTERS*

"Fire kills."—

Philippe Pétain,  
Marshal of France.





*Wide World Photos, Inc.*

Marshal Pétain (in gray) conferring the highest of all French decorations, the Médaille Militaire, on General Gamelin.



## Pétain and the Past

THE small, professional army necessary after the reign of Louis XIII, in whose name Richelieu ruled, was the creation of the Marquis of Louvois, Louis XIV's Minister of War.

A capable organizer, the marquis took the army in hand and made something more of it than a collection of knights errant. Before this, when war came men were rushed into service, but they were disorganized and often in the employ of nobles whose ideas differed as to what should be done. Louvois changed all this. To begin with, he made the army very definitely the King's army. Secondly, he put recruiting on a sane basis, leaving in civil life those who belonged there, enlisting only born soldiers, a policy approved years later by Louis XVI's Minister of War, the Comte de Saint Germain, who wrote that "in forming an army, you should take care not to destroy a nation."

The French enlisted in the royal army, but so did foreigners, Irish Catholics in revolt against Protestant England, Swiss, Swedes, Poles, Danes and Hungarians.

The proportion of foreigners was very large. When Louis XIV attacked Holland, of 125,000 infantry in his army, 45,000 were foreigners. So were half the cavalymen. By taking them in, the King deprived his enemies of these mercenaries. As for the officers, that was a different matter.

The practice of willing the family inheritance to the eldest son made younger sons available for the army. If they had means, they

could equip companies and regiments, and be made captains or colonels in command of these units. If they showed talent, they were promoted. But Louvois also found a place for those who had ability but no money. Such men were trained in the household guards or the musketeers, or in schools similar to Sandhurst in England and to West Point in America. As they advanced only through merit, they acted as a check on those who got into the army because of their money.

These last were anything but well disciplined. While they fought bravely, when the battle was over they were inclined to leave their units to lesser officers and go home, or to court. Even higher officers were undisciplined. Such great captains as Condé and Turenne had been with the King's enemies during the civil disturbances. With them, Louvois was tactful.

The lack of discipline that existed elsewhere he attacked directly, establishing a system that restored discipline automatically. Now that men were engaged for long periods, instead of for the moment, Louvois made them wear the King's uniform. Instead of lodging them with the people, he built barracks and kept them under control. When they marched from place to place, they did so in good order. Inspectors supervised training. As a result, the army was drilled, exercised and maneuvered. Soldiers were taught to handle arms, individually, and in company.

All this was new. So was equipment new, modern and effective. As Condé remarked of the bayonet, "you can do anything with it but sit on it," and it served the soldiers well. Furthermore, thanks to Louvois, where they had formerly been subject to the caprice of individual officers, when it came to food, lodging, clothes and money, they were now paid regularly and equally, and fed, clothed and housed in a way that kept them healthy and ready to take the field.

The problem of the soldier solved, Louvois turned to the officer. However well drilled they are, troops have to be led. To get the best results, they have to feel they are well led. Here

Louvois had a problem. Independent to a degree, the higher officers were still, for the most part, nobles accustomed to doing as they pleased.

This tendency Louvois repressed. No matter what their rank or birth, he broke these officers if they disobeyed. On the other hand, he was quick to reward merit. Records of accomplishment were kept, and promotion based on these records.

These officers whom merit brought to the top were given every means a general officer needed to win a battle. Companies of grenade throwers had been added to every regiment, and the use of cavalry studied. In addition, Louvois created three separate services, the artillery, engineer and supply corps, and he had officers specially trained to direct them. Like the cavalry, these aids to the infantry were perfected by specialists. With his inspectors' reports in hand, Louvois advised with one of the first General Staffs known to military history. Beside such combat commanders as Condé and Turenne, this staff included the great engineer, Vauban, whom Louis XIV made a Marshal of France.

It was Vauban who perfected those fortifications that were improved on afterward only in detail, and Vauban who created the system of supply. But it was the King who saw to it that the army was not only supplied, but honored. Regiments were given special uniforms, reminders of their exploits, while men especially competent in the use of arms had their pay increased and were gazetted to such noted units as the Grenadiers. With troops passing in full review, officers and soldiers both, when the occasion arose, were decorated by the King himself, or by one of the great commanders.

These decorations gave them the right to pensions that assured their old age, and, in addition, Louvois founded the Hotel des Invalides where retired veterans could live in the military atmosphere to which they were accustomed.

This all made for *esprit de corps*, but these appeals to men's pride and to their material interest were supplemented by a policy that had a single object, never to ask too much of the army.



While every force in France poured reinforcement, of one kind or another, into the fighting services, the army and the navy never over-drew. To have done so would have ended prosperity and the creation of prosperity was the sole purpose of the Kings, so they kept the army small.

They kept the army small, and so anything but a drain on the country, and they were able to do this for two reasons. First, they made the army effective by having experts arm and train it. Second, by their diplomacy they made friends of minor states.

This enabled them to concentrate the country's strength on the main enemy, the enemy who represented the principal threat to the natural frontiers of France.

The Kings made no effort to stay beyond these borders. Among states, the enemy of today might be a friend tomorrow, so, if the French invaded, the Kings limited the damage they did, knowing that France might need the invaded country a little later on. To them likes and dislikes, all those prejudices born of emotion, were of minor importance. What mattered was the realism that recognized what meant security for France.

This helped them judge.

The great Kings of France saw clearly that no security would last that was not based on justice. Because they saw clearly, they foresaw what Germany might come to mean. With this in mind, they tried to balance one force against another in Europe, to let none grow too large and so disturb what was just, for what "just" means is "exact." What is *exact* is *right*, and hence likely to endure. However prophets and preachers may shout, "justice" means no more than this, but it is further defined by what one is trying to do, and what the Kings were trying to do was preserve France from invasion.

The justice they dispensed had no other object. In so far as Germany was concerned, it consisted in keeping the small German states divided, and so in fear both of Austria and Prussia. If need be, they could fight on one side or the other, and thus restore the

balance of power whenever it was endangered. As a result, neither Austria nor Prussia grew too large, so neither aroused emotion. Thanks to the royal policy, there was no need of arousing among the French that fury against another people that gets completely out of hand, upsetting the ablest calculations. Thanks to the Kings, men did not have to be spent on giving effect to a people's fury.

This helped the army, for soldiers were few and expensive to train.

They represented a valuable investment and it was worth the Kings' while to conserve them, so arms were used only to attain restricted objectives. Instead of overwhelming territories, nerve centers were attacked. Junction points, which affected vitally the economy of an enemy state, were isolated, besieged with skill, and, above all, in a way that saved men's lives in so far as possible. While the great Condé, like Ney, led charges brilliantly, Turenne saw things as a whole. As commander-in-chief, he limited objectives to what policy demanded, and so won foreign wars without undue expense. But the enemies of the army were not all foreigners.

The army had enemies at home. When Louis XIV died, the Duc d'Orleans ruled as Regent because the King, Louis XV, was only five and the Duke represented the aristocratic faction that resented royal restrictions. Anxious to keep his power, the Regent gave the nobles their way. Where Louvois had made them obey, work, account for the funds allotted them, the Regency gave them free rein again and they destroyed what Louvois had done. As for Louis XV, when he came of age, he turned to the only father and friend he had ever known, his tutor, Cardinal Fleury.

The Cardinal was an able man, but timid, and too busy keeping the peace to fight the propaganda of Voltaire, now beginning to affect even the army. To Voltaire, as to Rousseau, discipline was a trick of the army and the Church. To the Duc de Choiseul, who took Fleury's place presently, discipline was the hope of French defense. Unless defense is made a first consideration and thorough-

ly organized, the enemies of France, eager to occupy France's rich territory, he reminded the King, will make attack a first consideration, and win.

This the King of Prussia, Frederick the Great, attempted.

He knew he could count on his friend, Voltaire, to convince the French, if not the King, that Protestant Prussia should be favored at the expense of Catholic Austria, so the Prussians had only to bide their time. In the meanwhile, Frederick played another card.

This trump was England.

This threat the French King met in a way typical of French royal policy. To keep the invader out of France, Louis concentrated force on the main enemy—that is, the enemy most likely to enter French territory—and stopped dispersing his strength by competing with the English in Canada, India and elsewhere. From now on only forays aimed at English communications were attempted, hints to behave such as that implied when Choiseul bought from Genoa the island of Corsica. But this base near English trade routes was no more than a side issue.

The main French force was concentrated on the Germans, and the spearpoint of that force was what was left of the French army. Of its lack of discipline, the high commanders complained to the King.

The great Marshal Saxe himself wrote to Paris before the battle of Fontenoy that he had been compelled to take severe measures to restore authority. With government money being misused by the nobles, soldiers were forced to pillage in order to eat. What was worse, the officers joined in the looting. Even had they been so inclined, they could not have controlled their men. Discipline had weakened to such an extent that before the battle of Rossbach a third of General Soubise's troops deserted.

He was beaten in advance, but a change for the better came when Louis XV, weary of the struggle, a prey of favorites, died, to be succeeded by his already mature grandson, Louis XVI. Calling in the Comte de Saint Germain as Minister of War, the new King

reformed the army, dividing it into those units known as divisions. Maneuvering as separate armies, these divisions were transferred from parade grounds to the field and kept in constant practice. In addition, troops were given the newest weapons. With this reconstituted army, Louis XVI held off the Germans. At the same time, by building up the navy he threatened English sea power so effectively that he was able to send an army under Rochambeau to America and help Washington end English rule there. Warfare by now was costing England a fortune.

This prompted Pitt and the other ministers of George III to attack the French monarchy. After all, what mattered in France was the monarchy, and Voltaire and Rousseau had already dug a pit for it. What the English did was to contribute a final push by financing propagandists of whom the best known were Mirabeau, a man with rich tastes and continually in debt; that Duc d'Orleans who was called Philippe Egalité, a cousin of the King who wanted to be King himself; the English writer, Tom Paine; and Lewis Goldsmith, a Portuguese Jew whose daughter married Lord Lyndhurst, Chancellor of England. All agents of England, these men helped bring on the Revolution by co-operating with foreigners like Necker, Marat and Clotz. Unlike these three, the Duke and Mirabeau, though they received funds from abroad, were French, and had French interests at heart. As for Paine, he was sincere.

It was Goldsmith who was typical of the hired propagandist. Jealous of Paine, alarmed by Paine's integrity, he started the story that Paine was a drunkard. Goldsmith, however, was worse. Spying for Napoleon, then for the Bourbons, he made his venality evident later. But by then the harm had been done.

The Emperor had bled France white, setting up a new school of military thought. As I have said, it was that of obtaining objectives by sacrificing masses of men insufficiently trained to use in any other way. Non-royal, this was new to France, and to this school, after the war of 1914-1918, Marshal Foch openly acknowledged his debt at an official ceremony in the Invalides in

Paris on May twentieth, 1921. Advancing to the tomb of the Emperor, Foch halted and bowed, exclaiming in a trembling voice: "Napoleon!" For this description the world is indebted to Marshal Pétain, who used it in his address to the French Academy.

"This tribute," he said, "summed up Foch's whole doctrine. Foch had made his own Napoleon's absolute conception of war. Like Napoleon, he proclaimed that 'the decisive attack,' that is the act that should consummate in irremediable fashion the defeat of the enemy, is the supreme argument of modern battle."

This was the opposite of Pétain's own conception of war, as Paul Valéry explained in welcoming the Marshal to the Academy, and Valéry's explanation gained immeasurably in force because of what Valéry himself represented. In every way, he represented the contrary of what Pétain meant to the country and its soldiers. Where Pétain was a warrior, Valéry was a pacifist, the most eminent in France. Though he reiterated that day Balzac's famous denunciation of the European passion for arms, he could not restrain his praise of Pétain.

This illustrious man, the ablest soldier France had known since Turenne, Valéry described as "one of those rare men whom the most difficult critics, the sharpest polemicists, even those who never stop trying to destroy reputations and who make it their business to ruin for the public anything great that begins to show itself"—even such men had to spare Pétain. "Even politics, which battens on injustice," Valéry reminded his hearers, had to respect Pétain.

The explanation of this Valéry found in Pétain's whole career. Slender, tall, a Northerner, the future Marshal was only outwardly cold, as his men found out when he took command. Literally, he lived with them. He knew them intimately. But his discovery that "*fire kills*," that to fling men against barbed wire and machine guns is nothing short of murder—this doctrine conflicted with that being taught by the French General Staff, with Foch's doctrine that "attack was the best defense." As the government refused to pro-

vide the army with machines, this attack had to be made with men, and Pétain opposed spending lives in this way. So he was pushed aside. When the war broke out in 1914, he was only a colonel and about to be retired.

His rise to the command of the French army grew out of the fact that he spared men instead of spending them, proving that war should be fought from a distance and by long range guns. At Verdun his first concern was to rush supplies there. Organizing this service of supply, building roads, he concentrated resistance in a spearhead that the Germans had to take, or leave their flanks exposed. Failing at enormous cost to take it, they were beaten. But what they did "because they had to do *something*" to keep the country satisfied that a final decision was not far off, the French also attempted.

The French losses were appalling.

The mutinies followed, and Pétain was called on to deal with them. "But these are our soldiers," he wrote, horrified, "who have been with us, for three years, in the trenches."

His duty, however, was plain, and he did it "royally," the French later agreed, for nothing comparable to what he did had been known in France since Louis XV, accompanied by the Dauphin and Marshal Saxe, walked the field at Fontenoy. Going from company to company, from regiment to regiment, "without hatred and without fear," said Valéry, Pétain "put down the mutinies, punished the weakness of the chiefs, the criminal acts in the troop." Waving aside staff officers and aids, this Marshal of France went among the men, talking with them in person, finding out what was wrong. Face to face with individual soldiers, or with small groups of them, he promised them personally that he would do all he could to remedy conditions.

He kept his word, just as he did years later when he went to Burgos as ambassador and the French were slow in living up to the agreement they had made with the Spanish dictator, General Franco. Spain's neutrality depended on that agreement, but Franco

knew he could trust the Marshal to see to it that the French government kept its faith.

He had studied under Pétain.

He knew him as one officer knows another, but officers are not all that make up an army.

The army is made up of all its soldiers, and what revived the French army, forged that instrument Foch used so effectively, what remade the French army was what Pétain did when the mutinies broke out. If he dealt justly, he tempered justice with mercy.

This was *his* conception of war. From the beginning of his career, this conception never varied: justice sanely conceived, mercifully enforced. Thanks to Pétain, France survived. Pushed by the politicians, General Nivelle had attempted the costly offensive that brought on the mutinies. Hundreds of thousands killed or wounded in a few brief hours. Damned by the politicians, Nivelle had been removed and Pétain had taken his place. But he did more than take Nivelle's place.

He stopped mass murder. Thanks to Pétain, nothing more was attempted until the British and the Americans were ready, and then what was done was done with guns rather than lives. For this the French were grateful, naturally, and Pétain became a symbol of the policy that spared men. As a symbol, he was admired. As an example, he was studied with a view to discovering what *really* distinguished him among men. Emotionally, men are much the same. Propagandists maintain the contrary, but they have a reason for doing so.

The propagandists win easy victories by shouting that such men as Lenin are nobler than the Czars.

It was the propagandists who sent men adventuring by claiming that in Spain the Republicans were good men, General Franco a bad man. But the fact is, such men, all men differ emotionally only slightly. While good breeding does refine the physique and so the mechanism that generates emotion, it does not do so enough to make much difference where the emotions are concerned. Emo-

tionally, men are relatively the same. Where men differ is in the will power and the intelligence that police the emotions.

This was evident in Pétain. In the army, training had formed his will, accustomed him to do his duty almost automatically. Education had shaped his mind, helped him form the conclusion that the army should be spared. To ask too much of the army would force the army to draw too heavily on the country.

This would end prosperity. So why ask the army to fight on several fronts? Why make enemies of Franco and Mussolini? As Blum knew, both threatened political and financial Internationals. But not France! They had been driven into the attitude they had taken. Only Germany really threatened France, but even on the German front men should be used with care. Fire kills.

This fact led Pétain to favor the promotion of his protégé, General Colson, who had been trained to conduct siege and defense operations in the manner approved by the Marshal. According to the well-informed in Paris, the Marshal also approved the check General Gamelin, as commander-in-chief, kept on the director of operations, "that bulldog from Foch's staff, General Georges." Bulldogs are all very well but, if men are to be spared, they have to be restrained. Beyond this point, however, Pétain never went. As a soldier, he minded a soldier's business, so, when his name was heard everywhere at the time of the February riots in 1934, he took a place in Doumergue's cabinet as Minister of War, instead of furthering revolution.

This turned the tide toward Bonapartism rather than the Nationalism represented by the Princes.



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## II

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### Princes and Police

THE Nationalism represented by the Princes of France made the defense of France a first consideration, as the Comte de Chambord made clear when he was offered the throne after the Franco-Prussian War. For a King, this was natural. To the King, France was home, and men will fight for their home as they will for nothing else on earth. To take *that* castle by direct assault is next to impossible, with odds anywhere near equal. Only by sneaking a wooden horse into Troy can it be overcome easily, and at a time when wooden horses were taking the form of propaganda and discriminatory taxation, the Comte wanted to be free both of politicians and financiers. So he demanded absolute power—that is, independence—though he was willing to submit his program to the people. That the people themselves wanted a King the monarchist majority in Parliament showed, but the politicians there insisted that the Comte acknowledge that the crown was a gift from them.

This he refused to do, but he did keep Nationalism alive. As he reminded the French, people know what is going on in their own community. Outside that narrow limit they cannot keep track of what those in power are doing. On the other hand, modern conditions make it necessary to organize communities by nations, for only nations can defend themselves from other nations. But who should be given power over a nation? To the Comte de Chambord, there was only one answer to this question.

A King risks losing not only his property, but his life, and not

only his own life, but the lives of his children, so he is all the more inclined to call to his aid, to favor and advance, strong men, tough fellows who will fight. In a country like France, easily invaded, constantly threatened, such a policy is essential. Naturally, the army favored it. For one thing, this policy favored the fighter, gave him the advancement that he felt was his due. For another, the army was committed, by tradition and training, as the King was, to the service of France as a whole, not to the purposes of particular parties within the country. So to these parties the army was a danger.

It was likely to throw them out of power if they risked the safety of the country.

This risk Republicans are only too likely to run because to them the defense of the nation is never a first consideration so long as they can safely put their own interests first. To them what matters is staying in power, so they have to win elections, often by toadying to the voter. In addition, to win elections, they have to have money to pay for campaigns, and this brought the bankers into the picture.

The engineers, the builders, the men who created values that sold strictly on their merit, these men were lined up with the army. Sensing the danger that this combination represented, the politicians, notably Clemenceau and Jaurès, seized on Dreyfus as an excuse for attacking the army.

This Jewish officer, Captain Alfred Dreyfus, was accused of having sold French military secrets to Germany, but this was only one aspect of a case that began as a German maneuver, the last of a series, for as early as 1875 Bismarck had begun seeking an excuse for making war. In 1888, when France became involved in a dispute with Italy, war was avoided, as it had been in 1875, only because the Emperor of Russia threatened Berlin with reprisals. That impressive six-footer, the Czar Alexander, was no one to fool with, so Bismarck settled back and bided his time—but his time was cut short by the young Emperor, William II, and with Bismarck's retirement there came a change in German methods.

The Germans now attacked France in a far more subtle manner. As Foreign Minister in Berlin and later as Chancellor, Prince Bernhard von Buelow was less "German" than his predecessors. Where they were direct, he was indirect, as the Dreyfus case showed. What others described as "carelessness" was undoubtedly intended.

It all began with the discovery that a French chambermaid at the German embassy was in the employ of the French secret service. Learning this, the Germans tried to prove it.

They had this chambermaid attacked as she was leaving the German embassy, but she called for help and was rescued before the papers concealed on her person had been taken from her. So Buelow decided to proceed indirectly. I say "decided" because it is a safe guess that he did just this. As to what Major von Schwarzkoppen did, there is no question whatever. But was he ordered to do what he did? Schwarzkoppen was the military attaché at the German embassy in Paris in 1894. Knowing very well that his French chambermaid was a spy, he tore an incriminating document in half—only in half!—then tossed it in the wastepaper basket for the chambermaid to find.

It had always been this woman's duty to empty this wastepaper basket, so Schwarzkoppen knew exactly what he was doing. As he knew, she always searched through the waste paper, so he was placing right under her nose, where she could not fail to find it, a report from an officer in the artillery section of the French General Staff. Only a limited number of French officers knew the facts in that report, and when Schwarzkoppen's chambermaid brought it to the French counter-espionage bureau, an investigation was ordered. On the advice of the famous criminologist, Bertillon, Dreyfus was questioned, then arrested, tried, convicted and sent to Devil's Island.

It was the American Ambassador in Berlin, John G. A. Leishman, who opened a window on the truth. While he was still representing the United States in Constantinople, he suggested to the German Ambassador, Marschall von Bieberstein, and to the Feld-

herr, von der Goltz, that "it was an extraordinary thing that a German military attaché should have been so 'careless' as to tear only in half an incriminating report and toss it then where the French were sure to find it. If what he did was due to 'carelessness,' why was he never court-martialed?" Later, in Berlin, he asked the German Foreign Minister, von Jagow, this same question. "Jagow only smiled," Leishman remarked afterward to his son.

The intention of the Germans was to betray a spy in order to stir up trouble between France and Germany, trouble meant to lead to war, many high-placed personages admitted to Leishman later. As war was inevitable, the Germans reasoned, why not fight when the Germans were ready and the French were unprepared? But what spy the Germans meant to betray is unknown, nor was that aspect of the case important except to Dreyfus, the officer upon whom suspicion fell at first.

The whole affair was kept a close secret for a time, but finally Edouard Drumont got hold of the news and published the findings of the court-martial in his paper.

The next day the story was headlined in every paper, revealing a threat to France that both frightened and infuriated the French. Of this state of mind the Germans took an immediate advantage, demanding the "impossible," namely a statement clearing the Germans of any connection with Dreyfus. As a French court-martial had just convicted Dreyfus of spying on behalf of the Germans, the French could hardly backwater, and war was avoided finally only because the Kaiser himself was opposed to the plan of the German General Staff. But the fact that peace was preserved did not end the Dreyfus case.

It was to continue in France and be used as an excuse to disarm France as she had never before been disarmed.

The fact that Dreyfus had been condemned on circumstantial evidence made possible a campaign to establish his innocence. That there would be such a campaign, the authorities were duly warned.

The Prefect of Police in Paris, Louis Lepine, says this warning

came immediately. In his memoirs he records that right after the arrest of Dreyfus on October fifteenth, 1894, the Grand Rabbi of France, Zadock Kahn, called on him to say that the Jews proposed to defend a member of their race who had been unjustly accused and that they proposed to do this thoroughly.

The Grand Rabbi did not understate the intention.

This defense was to take on world proportions, but that this was entirely due to the Jews many doubted, among others the German Socialist leader, William Liebnicht. Arrested in 1895 because of his attacks on Bismarck, he studied in prison the records of the Dreyfus case published by *Le Temps* in Paris.

The records show that Dreyfus was convicted in the fall of 1894. Following his conviction, his brother developed the charge that another member of the General Staff, Major Esterhazy, was the real criminal. Tried and acquitted, Esterhazy went to England. By now Clemenceau had taken up the case, and published in his paper, *L'Aurore*, the accusations brought by the novelist, Emile Zola, against officers whom he accused of having judged Dreyfus unfairly because Dreyfus was a Jew. With the Paris mob threatening both Zola and Clemenceau, the former was found guilty of libel and fled to England. Charges that English money was paying for the campaign in favor of Dreyfus were freely made. France and England were at odds over Egypt. War threatened, and, using Dreyfus as an example of what the army could do to an innocent man, the politicians of the Left, led by Clemenceau and Jaurès, went before the electorate in May, 1898, and won.

The discovery that a forgery had been used against Dreyfus made a new trial inevitable presently, but Esterhazy, now in funds where formerly he had been in debt, refused to come back from London and testify in favor of Dreyfus. What he did do was confess that he was the guilty man. But he had already been acquitted of this charge, so he could not be tried again. Finally, in open court at Rennes, Dreyfus too was tried again. On September third, 1899, he was found guilty once more, but in order to bring to an

end a discussion that was disrupting France he was given, and accepted, a pardon. Seven years later the French Supreme Court decreed that Dreyfus was innocent and refused to allow a re-opening of the case, a new trial that might have aroused old passions, now partially appeased.

The accused man was then restored to his rank in the army, where, during the war, he was advanced to the grade of lieutenant-colonel. But his real significance was elsewhere. As Anatole France said, Dreyfus was a symbol. He represented the war between "the authoritarianism of the propertied classes and the Catholic theocracy, on one side, and, on the other, socialism and free thought." But that struggle was in France, and when the Free Thinkers and Socialists won there, they disarmed France as she had never been disarmed before, a pleasing circumstance to the Germans who had helped make the most of the Dreyfus case, as Liebnicht suspected when he studied the record. With this thoroughly digested, the famous German Socialist leader in 1899 denounced to the "Socialists of the world that orchestra of five hundred newspapers, which, on the order of some mysterious conductor" was stirring up a campaign that could serve no other purpose than that of German militarism.

This was far sighted. Whatever its immediate purpose, the campaign in favor of Dreyfus did weaken the French army, and this helped Germany, German military writers admitted. Discussing his conversations with Schlieffen, Waldersee and Moltke, Chiefs of the German General Staff, General von Kuhl stated that the Germans did not decide on the turning movement through Belgium until they saw what had happened in France because of the Dreyfus case.

The Dreyfus case had developed beyond their wildest dreams. Originally they had intended to denounce a spy and bring on war immediately, but exactly what spy did the Germans have in mind? In an American encyclopedia published in 1935 the statement is made that it was proved absolutely by Schwarzkoppen's memoirs

that Esterhazy was the real criminal, but Bainville states that the "published memoirs of Schwarzkoppen still admit of contradictory assumptions," and other authorities agree with him. Furthermore, unlike a well-known English encyclopedia, this American encyclopedia fails to mention the chief book devoted to the Nationalist point of view.

This American encyclopedia also states that Dreyfus was made a lieutenant-general.

There was no such rank in the French army, nor was Dreyfus ever made a general. Victim of an apparently endless propaganda, the poor man was like a top, whipped and whirled by thousands. International bankers used him to cripple the French threat to Egypt and so to English sea power. International politicians, like the Socialists, needed him as an excuse for ousting Royalists, a victory they literally bought in France, for what disarmament meant was spending on the people money that would otherwise have been spent on an army pledged to the Nationalism represented politically by the Princes.

The Princes were of no great help here. In 1885 the head of the House of France had been exiled along with his heir. Chambord was dead, and the succession had passed to the younger branch of the family, all of them Bourbons descended from Henry of Navarre, Princes called Capet simply because of the great prestige associated with the name of the first defenders of a united France, Kings from whom the Bourbons were indirectly descended. Furthermore, these Princes of the younger branch were all called Princes of Bourbon-Orleans, and the name Orleans aroused rather mixed emotions. After all, the first Prince known by that name, the Regent, had been leader of that aristocratic rebellion against monarchical power which ended in disaster when another Duc d'Orleans, Philippe Egalité, directed the Masons at the time of the Revolution.

The head of the family at the time of the Dreyfus affair was

Philippe, Duc d'Orleans. Officially "Chief of the House of France," he was frequently described as the Pretender, a description to which the Prince objected as discourteous.

He was not a Pretender, he was an exiled King. Educated at Sandhurst in England, he came to France. Once in France, he tried to enlist, only to be arrested.

A famous opera singer prevailed on President Carnot to free him, an incident that angered his fiancée, the sister of the Duc de Guise, and Philippe's cousin. Later Philippe married the Austrian Archduchess, Maria Dorothea. But nothing came of that. No heir, only law suits that brought the Duke into the limelight where he had already been because of the congratulations he extended publicly to an artist who had drawn an unpleasant cartoon of Queen Victoria at the time of the Boer War. Immensely wealthy, he continued, nevertheless, to live in England. But he was ignored by an English society that had made a friend of the Empress Eugénie. Undisturbed by all this, the Duke went on appearing publicly with the opera singer, Nellie Melba. In 1926, he died, to be succeeded by his cousin, the Duc de Guise, who was married to Orleans' sister.

The new Chief of the House of France had been a favorite of the Republicans and helpful during the war when the government had given him both the Croix de Guerre and the Legion of Honor. Forced now to take up his residence in exile, at the Manoir d'Anjou near Brussels, the Duke, for the most part, kept still. But what he did, he did with dignity.

The occasional manifestos he addressed to the French people, reminded them in simple, straightforward terms of all the monarchy had once meant to France. If they needed him, he was ready.

He was waiting, beyond the frontier, to be called to the throne of France. But if the Duc de Guise himself, and his son, were exiles, the Duke's wife and daughters were not. Isabelle, the eldest, was already the wife of Bruno, Comte d'Harcourt. Anne was to marry the Italian Prince who later became Duc d'Aosta, and



Françoise Prince Christopher of Greece. Even before they were married, however, French Princesses, however young, were always referred to as Madame.

The last of the family to marry abroad was the Duke's son, Henri Robert Ferdinand Marie Louis Philippe de Bourbon, more briefly known by his title and always described in Royalist writings as Son Altesse Royale Monsieur le Comte de Paris.

The Comte de Paris was born in the Château of Nouvion-en-Thierache on July fifth, 1908. While he had been brought up in France, he was forced to follow his father in exile, and it was at Palermo on April eighth, 1931, that he was married to Isabelle, Princess of Orleans and Bragance, and so a cousin of his. Born in 1911, she was a descendant of the Bourbon Prince who had ruled in Brazil as an Emperor.

The Comte and Comtesse had several children, among them two boys. But having children was not all the Comtesse did. She was credited with taking quite as active an interest in politics as her young husband showed, for, after their marriage, the Duc de Guise entrusted all political activities to his son and heir, and active this young man unquestionably was. Known also by the old monarchical title, the Dauphin, the Comte de Paris wrote books and articles. Finally, he began publishing a weekly paper, the *Courrier Royal*. But it was not this—at least not ostensibly—that brought him into conflict with the *Action Française*, which was a political movement as well as a newspaper.

The Prince's quarrel with the men who had revived the whole Royalist movement in France was the result of attacks made on his aide, the Comte de la Rocque, a brother of the Colonel de la Rocque who was the head of the group of war veterans called the Croix de Feu. Known as Fascists for a time, this group had failed to march on the Chamber of Deputies when the riots over Stavisky reached a climax on the night of February sixth, 1934. Accused in open court by André Tardieu of having been on the government's secret pay roll, Colonel de la Rocque was also bitterly attacked by

Daudet and Maurras. At the same time they called into question the activities of the Colonel's brother, and the Comte de Paris came to his rescue.

This attempt to take the center of the stage from the veteran Maurras divided the Royalists. Naturally, the Prince was charged with ingratitude, though gratitude is not the business of Princes. Their duty is to serve their people as a whole, not individuals. Furthermore, in this particular case, the Comte de Paris did constructive thinking a considerable service by putting his finger squarely on the truth about Maurras. What Maurras had been concerned with for years was not the restoration of monarchy, but immortality, "the preservation of life in the midst of death." Now an hereditary monarchy, by passing the material and intellectual capital of the father to the son, does insure that continuity which is the nearest approach that we know on earth to what is eternal. But so does aristocracy. However, aristocratic rule had always proved dangerous in France because "the great" quarrel among themselves, and so create conditions that increase the danger of invasion. Because the aristocrats were fighting among themselves, the English over-ran France until Jeanne d'Arc threw them out. But invaders do not always come openly with arms. Sometimes they sneak in, as the English did, when they helped establish Free Masonry in France, lodges the aristocrats joined, and paid for propaganda that eventually brought down the monarchy.

This Maurras knew. As a patriot, he favored monarchs because they act as arbiters, and keep aristocrats and everyone else working together. As a philosopher, he saw in monarchy a practical way to guarantee the continuance of a civilization that expressed the immortal, the principle that withstands the attack of time. As personalities illustrating his meaning the Capetian Kings served Maurras' purpose. But his immediate purpose was to get results, so the assumption that he was completely committed to the cause of the Bourbons was mistaken. Naturally, they were useful because he could always point to their ancient record, but, like Siegfried, he

knew that the French were far more Bonapartist than Royalist, that they preferred a Daladier to a Prince.

"The son of a baker to a Prince?" I once heard an alarmed woman, wearing quite a number of diamonds, ask the American diplomat, General Charles H. Sherrill.

"Well, why not?" he answered. "After all, as Dante said, and as Charles Maurras must know, the first Capetian King, Hugh Capet, was the son of a butcher."

The attitude that Maurras took toward Daladier indicated that he knew this, and did not care, that butchers and bakers did not matter if only France were defended. Sure of himself, certain that he was right in wishing to restore, first of all, the defensive power of French civilization, he struck out savagely. For sheer striking power, nothing comparable to his notorious "Letter to Schrameck" has ever been published in modern times in a civilized country.

This man, Abraham Schrameck, was Minister of the Interior. In an open letter, sent to Schrameck and then published in *L'Action Française*, Maurras summed up the situation, and then threatened to have Schrameck shot "like a dog" if any more Royalists were murdered. No one doubted for a moment that Maurras both could and would carry out his threat. But no more Royalists were harmed, so nothing more serious came of this. In any event, it had all been a part of a national political fight in which the Nationalists were being disarmed by the police, while the Communists and others of a similar persuasion were allowed far more freedom. With these others, Maurras came to grips when he threatened to have Blum, and the "140," the Deputies allied with the Socialist leader, killed if they brought on war with Italy, as "they are trying to do," Maurras wrote.

This threat had far-reaching consequences. For one thing, there was no war. For another, the threat was so sensational that it landed the Royalist leader on the first page of all the papers.

The conspiracy of silence that had hedged him in for years had been broken, but this was a detail. What was anything but a detail

was the way in which Maurras had directed attention to the value of action, for his threat, his imprisonment for making it—these were like claps of thunder that kept reiterating, "Stop talking, men of France, and act." From then on the search in France among the men who mattered, the men who would fight a war, was for a leader, a man who would act instead of talking.

The trail led to Daladier.

This enraged the Princes. Repudiating Maurras, and so suggesting that they would accept a modified form of Republicanism, they implied that what he had done had favored Daladier, and so Bonapartism, as, in fact, it had. As the Comte de Paris said, Maurras' Nationalism and Daladier's were not so far apart. At least in patriotic fervor, they both resembled that of the Jacobins at the time of the Revolution. What the Comte failed to recall was that the Jacobins not only talked—they acted. But it would be unfair to the Prince to refer only to the reverse of the medal. While he talked and wrote considerably for a man whose business was supposed to be action rather than conversation, he did show himself as well in the role of a fighting man.

An accomplished aviator, he flew into France and issued a statement. Having shown the public that he was a seasoned pilot, he demanded categorically the right to serve in the French army. Neither Lebrun nor Daladier answered him. To have done so would have increased the troubles of the police.

It was one of their minor duties to keep the Comte out of France. Fearing the army, for years the Republicans had depended on the police to enforce their will. To be free of any danger that the army might represent, Briand had even created, within the police force itself, an army known as the Mobile Guard. While these guards were efficient and courageous, they were called on to control strikes and public demonstrations, a circumstance that reminded people too definitely of what the police were defending, of whom they represented, a party, the politicians—in short, the Republic, the regime.

This the army had not done, so, as the threat from abroad developed, people's approval centered slowly but surely on the army. Led by Daladier, the army stood for France, for the French as a whole, not for one party or another, and the army had traditions. Soldiers were no mob, equipped with guns.

They were men pledged to act, not talk, but they obeyed certain well-known rules, rules honored by decent people everywhere.

### III

## Generals and Gamelin

IT WAS after the Stavisky riots, when arms were taken away from people, that they began to realize that governments can entrust arms to soldiers only because soldiers are pledged to a standard of conduct approved by society. A feeling within them known as honor prompts them to obey the rules, and discipline reinforces this feeling, so they are doubly controlled. But for this control there is a special as well as a general reason. Warfare is not only complicated, it is quick, so it must be controlled from headquarters. Aware of the whole situation as well as details, this central command must be obeyed without question.

There can be no talking back. In an army, anarchy is fatal. Any hesitation, any discussion may mean death. Unless force can be concentrated immediately where it is needed, disaster may result, for the enemy takes advantage of errors and delays. In consequence, a conception of behavior determined by fixed principles is essential. Any variation from a fixed standard endangers every individual in the army, the army itself and the country it defends, so it is not false pride that makes a professional soldier critical of those who talk too much and argue.

It is fear for his life.

It is a wholesome and well-grounded fear of the conscientious objector, of the man who insists on doing the thing in his way rather than in the army's. Such objectors are always guided by that variable thing, the individual conscience.

This makes for uncertainty, for no one ever knows exactly just what men will do who let conscience be their guide. Unless it is restrained, the individual conscience is affected too much by selfish considerations, by "What's in it for me?" or by "What will I get out of this?" Left to themselves, individuals, as innumerable sects and ethical societies show, disagree as to what is true and even as to what is right and wrong, and no strict discipline, like that of the Church, forces them to conform even to such principles as they acknowledge. But in the army they must conform to the dictates of the collective conscience. To do otherwise would endanger the army and the country, so successful governments always have a fixed standard and train men to honor it.

This standard of honor, reinforced by discipline, helps soldiers stand their ground under fire. Unfortunately, civilian employees of a government are sometimes less likely to do this. Citizens are sometimes left to shift for themselves by ambassadors and their staff. The citizens of a great nation had an experience of this sort in Paris in September, 1939. Unable to get gas masks elsewhere, they asked for them at their embassy, only to be told that none were available for "our nationals." But the embassy staff had them. Cars were waiting to rush THEM out of town, and they were very critical of their own government which ordered them to stay in Paris until the French government moved. Soldiers who behaved in this way toward the people they were bound in honor, and incidentally paid, to protect, would be called before a court-martial. Even under the difficult circumstances that faced them in 1914, French soldiers stood up to their tragic duty.

There was no question that they would have to block the frontier with their lives, for neither guns nor fortifications were sufficient for this purpose. As I have said, as late as January sixth, 1914, the inspector general of artillery had warned the Minister of War that "from the point of view of improving the material in our forts, no improvement has been made for forty years." As for the famous French field gun, the 75, it tended to wear out more

rapidly than the German 77, losing exactitude after 1300 to 1500 shots, where the German piece held up for well over 2000 shots. In addition, the Germans had six thousand 77's where the French had only four thousand 75's. When it came to machine guns, the Germans had twice what the French had. While the French had only 136 airplanes and the Germans 220, the empire's domination of the field was due to its heavy guns.

The French had no heavy guns worth mentioning. In the forts, while there were guns that threw heavy shells, they were awkward to handle and repeated slowly. Their range was less than a mile, and they were difficult to move.

They were useless. As critics later admitted, if the French had had anything even remotely approaching what the Germans had the story might have been very different. When the Germans advanced, they did so behind a curtain of lead twice as heavy in weight and frequency as anything the French could offer.

The German 105's, 150's and 210's laid down a barrage six, seven and almost ten miles in advance of the infantry. With the more powerful guns from Austria, the Germans beat down the forts at Liège, Namur and Maubeuge, and into the hell that all this created the French infantry advanced. That it lacked training, Clemenceau had learned in the Senate early that July.

There had been no money provided for camps and target ranges.

There was a shortage as well of non-commissioned officers, the experts to whom the preliminary training of troops is confided. In addition, rifles were old, outmoded. Airplanes aside, observation was restricted to a few balloons, and ones definitely inferior to the German in a field that the Germans dominated with their Zeppelins. In addition, communication by telephone had been left undeveloped in France. Worse yet, there was a shortage of hospital supplies and even of field kitchens. Worst of all the infantry went to the front wearing bright-red trousers, a target for German guns that had all the effect of an invitation. While the Germans outmarched their artillery, a fifth of the best troops of France were



killed before the Germans were turned back. For this appalling and disproportionate loss, who was responsible? The question was asked frequently, and with a bitterness that few ever tried to mask. But it was a foreign ambassador who answered it in an unusual way.

"The individual conscience was responsible for all this," he said. "Instead of heeding the lessons of experience, the politicians did what they wanted to do, and let their consciences persuade them that what they wanted was right."

It was Clemenceau who put the facts more simply. In the twilight of his life, he admitted, like the man he was, that "we were responsible. We thought of ourselves, not France. We wanted too much to win elections, instead of wars and peace." As he recalled with that tendency to render justice where it was due that characterized his later days, "many of the generals protested, but I found out the truth too late."

The generals began to worry about the army again in the years that followed the war, but they had no one to lead them. Foch was hesitant. Mangin, removed from his command, died suddenly. Pétain, the most influential of them all, was a Republican who, more than anyone else, saved the regime at the time of the Stavisky troubles. Not the generals, but Tardieu, forced the building of the Maginot line of fortifications in the East, but this became less sure when Hitler marched into the Rhineland in 1936, and far less sure when Hitler began building airplanes and France slowed down production under Blum. By now, however, the generals had found a friend in Daladier.

His chief adviser was General Gamelin. Born on the Boulevard Saint Germain near the War Department in Paris, on September twentieth, 1872, he came on both sides from a family of fighters. But his father was Flemish.

His mother was from Lorraine, that border district where Catholicism was traditional. Educated at the College Stanislas, Maurice Gustave Marie Gamelin studied history under the future

Cardinal Baudrillart, but his real passion was philosophy and he made the most of the teachings of Henri Bergson.

A quiet, thoughtful young man, at nineteen he entered the First Battalion of France.

This is composed of the student officers at the Ecole Militaire Speciale, familiarly known as Saint Cyr. Located near Versailles, this famous academy corresponds to Sandhurst in England and to West Point in America. First in his class, young Gamelin was sent to the Algerian Rifles in 1893, and in the colonies he made a careful study of geography. In that field he became a recognized authority. Recalled and sent to the War College, he was described by Foch as "my best pupil," and installed by Joffre in the General Staff.

It was as Joffre's operations officer that he learned the cost of attack when it is insufficiently supported by artillery. But after the retreat that lasted all through August in 1914 and ended only when the Germans had outmarched their artillery and over-reached themselves, Gamelin wrote at Joffre's behest the famous order of September first, the command to turn and attack. Later, when "nibbling" at the German line began, he asked to be transferred to a combat division, and at forty-four years of age he was made a brigadier. In 1917 he assumed command of a division. By a furious attack launched against six German divisions, he saved his own troops from destruction. But he took a long chance—one in which he shared, however, for he was cited in general orders not only for his ability, but for his personal courage. Always, it seems, he was calm, and in 1939, as commander-in-chief of the French and British armies both, he still looked almost young, for his unlined face was that of a man in his fifties.

His past recommended him. Soft-spoken, well-mannered, when he succeeded General Maxime Weygand as commander-in-chief in 1935, he had before him the task of convincing the politicians that guns and munitions meant saving thousands of lives in case of war. And he convinced many of them, notably Daladier.

He was patience and tact itself, those who knew him said, but

the spade work had been done already by Marshal Pétain. In smiling on Gamelin's appointment to the supreme command, the Marshal took account of the qualities required in the man in charge of general headquarters and the whole situation.

These qualities Gamelin had, but they in no way diminished the reputation of Pétain's aide, General Louis Antoine Colson. Three years Gamelin's junior, and from Toul in the East, General Colson graduated from the Polytechnic School of engineering in 1896, and became a major general in 1931. Reputed to be a master of siege operations, studious and retiring, this officer was little known to the public despite his reputation. Better known were officers like Billotte who had commanded in Paris, and Giraud. Taken prisoner in the last war, Giraud had escaped. Working as a stableman, then as a coal merchant in Germany, he had collected valuable information.

The story of his exploits had endeared him to the public. Like the field commander and operations chief, General Georges, he had been wounded, but Georges was wounded at Marseilles when King Alexander of Yugoslavia was assassinated. One of the more brilliant of Foch's aides, it had always been thought that Georges would be given the chief command. Caution prevented this. While Georges showed every sign of being an able combat commander, combat commanders are one-idea men. Their idea is to take objectives.

It is for others to reckon the cost, just as it is for statesmen to determine what policy shall be.

This they had done in France and in a way that had affected vitally the careers of all these officers whose measure had not as yet been taken in 1939. All that could be safely said about them was that they had grown up in difficult circumstances. That they had survived was in itself a tribute, as General Weygand made clear in his book on the French army.

Its calvary began with the Dreyfus case. With the Church disestablished and the people being taught to think as the politicians

wished, the politicians proceeded to tie the hands of the army, the one force left that made the defense of France, not money making or vote getting, a first consideration. As General Weygand recalls, this attack took various forms. Spies reported whether officers went to mass or not, and this fact was recorded against them on their record, while the troops themselves were called on to do police work that made them unpopular with the people. Simultaneously, propagandists called on the soldiers to revolt. Charges brought against individuals in the army for infraction of discipline increased in two years from approximately five thousand to more than seventeen thousand a year. Then a reaction set in. In the Chamber of Deputies Alexander Millerand and Paul Doumer protested against the spying of the Republicans, and a Nationalist deputy, Syveton, slapped the Republican General, André, who was Minister of War.

This general and minister had boasted of accepting the aid of the Free Masons in his campaign against the religious practices of the officers. So Syveton attacked him. But Syveton was to die shortly after under mysterious circumstances, and even Clemenceau, whose attacks on the army and its officers at the time of the Dreyfus case had sunk to a level of personalized and poisoned invective unknown since the Revolution—even Clemenceau grew alarmed.

It was Clemenceau who attempted to restore better feeling in the army. As Minister of War, he called the future Marshal Foch to his office.

"I am going to offer you, Colonel, an important assignment," Clemenceau said.

"Have you forgotten," Foch asked, "that my brother is a Jesuit priest?"

The old Tiger shrugged. Already he saw the handwriting on the wall, even if he did not learn the full truth till July, 1914. Less pessimistic than Clemenceau, General Weygand, years later, was to discover some good in all these attacks on the army that had marked the progress of the Dreyfus case.

"This happy afterthought," a critic wrote, "should be studied."

The general had written that an army too much admired, an army for which everything has been made easy, lets itself go, fails to keep to a high standard. But when an army is attacked at home by propaganda, General Weygand went on, "it tries to live in a fashion above reproach and to perfect itself." Unfortunately, the army in France did not get far, however much it may have tried, until Clemenceau took charge again in 1917 and gave the abler generals their chance, only to push the army once more into the background after the peace of Versailles. When he saw war coming again in 1929, Clemenceau seems to have realized the meaning of what he had done. But only then, and Mangin was dead.

It was Mangin's counterpart, General Georges, who took the brunt of that new attack on the army which developed three years before the war of 1939. Many competent commentators such as Saint-Brice, Charles Morice, and the former Minister of War, Jean Fabry, have described this attack, but in dealing with it the famous military critic, Raymond Recouly, was more specific. As he said, speaking of Blum's government, "heavy artillery, anti-aircraft guns, tanks: nothing was being produced" in 1936 and 1937. "Worst of all was the fact that" Blum's Minister of Aviation, "Cot, having withdrawn this important service from the control of the General Staff, succeeded, in no time, in interrupting the pace of production," a circumstance that forced the French to yield to Hitler at Munich.

The French began to recover from that moment. As a school-mate of General Georges, Recouly records that the General all along had been sure that his fellow countrymen would come to their senses. Not for nothing had he served as military adviser to the famous Minister of War, André Maginot. While he realized that France might have to fight, thanks to Blum's diplomacy, "not on one front, as in 1914, but on two or three," Recouly credits the general with being committed to the royal policy of concentrating on the main enemy. If the main enemy is attended to first, minor enemies are no problem. But only machines could meet the

German threat. That they would be supplied presently, Georges was confident, but only experts could handle them.

It takes time to train experts and they have to be seconded by troops willing and prompt to obey, so it was to the question of discipline that Georges and the other generals addressed themselves. Here they faced a problem.

The Communists were being allowed by Blum to propagandize the soldiers. Everywhere revolt was being preached. That the officers were able to keep propaganda out of barracks—and, incidentally, off warships—speaks well for the respect and affection they inspired. But it also speaks well for the men themselves, for Frenchmen are not Germans.

They think for themselves, but in 1936 and 1937 they did not break ranks as they did at the time of the Dreyfus case. Instead, they set an example. Co-operating with the officers, they helped solve society's main problem, which is not organizing in gangs for purposes of defense, something men do instinctively.

The real problem is to prevent such gangs from becoming a curse.

This problem the army solved. By the honor system it trained men to live up to a high standard, to serve others, the country as a whole. But in training the mind as well as the will, the army tended to fix attention on details, on tactics and strategy. While the generals realized that a falling birth rate and the education responsible for it had increased the difficulty of defending the French environment, that was not their affair.

It was a question for statesmen and politicians, a question of policy, a policy that had made man power, and so the admirals and Africa, pre-eminently important.

## IV

### Admirals and Africa

THE policy of the French Republic for years had made the question of man power pre-eminently important. But men are of two kinds. Because of some inner predilection, they express themselves best either in one field or another.

They either act well or they talk well, but men who specialize in the field of thought are useless to a nation unless they recognize the primary importance of men competent to carry out decisions, to give effect to policy. Specializing in political theory, Jaurès decided that France could get along without men of action, without the army—that the Germans, the world, could be conquered with words. That his were not equal to this business, the war of 1914 showed. After it, Briand and Herriot, then Blum, despite all that Poincaré, Tardieu, Gaston Doumergue and Laval could do, attempted what Jaurès had failed to accomplish. What Blum forgot, and Herriot in the end recalled, was that the Internationalism they advocated ran counter to the fundamental instinct of the French people. For two thousand years, ever since Caesar discovered them, the French had been Nationalists. Instinctively, they realized that they must depend on themselves, not others.

The tendency to depend on others is a tendency of weak men, and the decline of France set in when the system began putting weak men in power. Under Napoleon III, France still was dominant. Under the Republic it became constantly more and more dependent on allies and colonies.

This happened because France was no longer ruled by men with an assured future. In the regular army men are not thrown out of jobs overnight. Their future is assured. If they risk their lives, they are also taken care of, as Louvois meant them to be. Napoleon, too, provided for them. So did the Republic. In this respect, royal, imperial and democratic policy did not differ. But in the outside world everything had changed. Where, under the monarchy, society had been organized, under the Republic it had been disorganized. In a world of individualists everyone had to scramble for himself.

The inevitable result of this was that men tended to put their personal interest, or that of their party, of a *part* of the country, first.

The effect of this was fatal. Strong men and bright men there were, unquestionably, among those who ruled France after Napoleon III. But, in the last analysis, it is obvious that they were too mean to think of others, and so, comparatively speaking, they were weak in character. Too short-sighted to think of the future, to see anything but an immediate gain, to realize that their fate was inextricably interwoven with that of the French, they made France dependent on England and on Russia, and so showed themselves intellectually deficient, for, in the long run, this policy traced a declining curve of profit. England and Russia drew too heavily on France. In the meantime, the bankers and industrialists cashed their own checks and they were big ones, representing in part a commission on foreign loans.

They grew rich, but the country as a whole did not. In the end, it was forced to spend 1,700,000 lives to save France from its enemies.

The hatred of the rich in France was intensified by this sacrifice, for Russia sold out. England, representing an imperial population well over four times that of imperial France, laid down only about half as many lives as the French did during the war of 1914-1918 and by no means all of these British soldiers died on the Western



front in an effort to free France from the invader. Furthermore, after the war and after refusing France the Rhineland, England and America rebuilt Germany with a stream of loans. All this gave the French "rudely to think," as Poincaré put it to me, for the sole hope of France, the army, had been pushed into the background for fear it might overthrow the regime. Due to official education and to propaganda in the press that Girardin sold to the financiers, the people unquestionably feared this as much as those who profited from the regime did, for the people had been taught that the Republic meant freedom. But that it did not mean freedom from invasion, and this freedom is at the heart of every other freedom, history showed clearly. Nor had invaders always come with arms.

They had come with bank accounts as well and their money had been responsible for two well-defined propagandas. One sought to convince the French that their welfare depended on Communism, the other that prosperity was due to co-operation with an economic system that depended on the sea power of England. Both propagandas favored Internationalism at the expense of the Nationalism instinctive with the French. But if this Nationalism were to survive, if it were to continue under its own steam, the engines that made it move would have to be stoked by men brought from abroad.

There were not enough men in France to do this, as the production figures and the record of sales showed. Under the Third Republic the balance of trade had been constantly unfavorable. France was constantly buying more abroad than she sold to foreigners. While this deficit was made up for in part by the money tourists spent in France, a country cannot depend on visitors from other lands. With a rapidly falling birth rate, the French had to get men elsewhere, men who would work and men who would fight.

These they found mainly in Africa.

The transfer to France of these men, however, many of them colored, had to be assured and protected.

This explains the growth of the French navy. While the English

could have policed this life-line that led across the Mediterranean and along the Atlantic, the French preferred to do this themselves, and for two reasons. For one thing, they decided, it is always better to depend on home talent. For another, the value of the British navy had been open to question since the World War, not only among naval experts in every foreign capital, but even in England. To realize the extent to which this questioning had gone, those who were interested had only to read or reread the memoirs of the British First Lord of the Admiralty, Winston Churchill. In addition, the record spoke for itself.

The escape of the *Goeben* and the *Breslau* from more heavily armed British ships; the raids on the English coast and the farcical slip-up that prevented the British destroyers and submarines, and the battle cruisers under Beatty, though they were in a position to do so, from cutting off the German flying squadron; the failure to go through at the Dardanelles, though the Turkish batteries had been silenced and mainly French ships lost—all this alarmed the French. While the situation was partially remedied, when one flag came down and that of Sir John Michael de Robeck was hoisted in its place, criticism went on, for the German submarines were still safe behind the island of Helgoland, and nothing was done about this, despite the obvious need for action. Furthermore, when the German Highseas Fleet did come out from behind that stronghold, German armor, fire and strategy permitted it to escape at Jutland from a British fleet far more powerful. Down came Sir John R. Jellicoe's flag then, and up went Beatty's, but even when the Americans joined the British, nothing was done about Helgoland. What did the French think about this? Naturally, that if there should be a disaster in the North Sea, they would be more than ever dependent on reinforcements from Africa. So they decided to build, or rather rebuild, their own navy.

This proved to be an achievement, due to the special circumstances that obtained in 1920. In the war the French had lost one hundred and fourteen warships. Worse still, during the war, they

had not been able to spare men to build ships. While the English were creating a new flotilla weighing 1,174,000 tons, the French had been able to turn out only 20,000 tons. By 1920, to all intents and purposes, the French navy no longer existed.

This situation was remedied. By 1939, the French had built a new fleet of 546,000 tons, including those two great ships, the *Dunkerque* and the *Strasbourg*. Another 100,000 tons were ready to be launched.

The figures are significant, but no more so than the promotion of François Darlan to the rank of Admiral of the Fleet. For years the French Republic had denied officers high standing in order to emphasize civilian distinctions. Now they wanted an officer whose title was quite as impressive as those given the British commanders, but in according this distinction they had in mind Darlan's other qualities. In the French navy, the merit system prevailed.

The admirals who directed the French fleets and squadrons were there because of their record. Men did not have to be "gentlemen," as in the British navy, in order to command, for experience had shown that in France the difference between so-called gentlemen and the man in the street was always slight. No long bridge was required to bring the Princes of France and such a man as Edouard Daladier together on an equal footing. As foreign diplomats knew, the difference in France between Princes and commoners, theoretically, was always the fact that with Princes experience was passed from father to son without disturbing the orderly process of government. But this never altered the fact that if the Prince of Condé, the King's cousin, led Frenchmen gloriously, so did the cooper's son, Marshal Ney.

The Admiral of the Fleet in 1939, however, did have a record that went further back than his own. As the naval critic, René La Bruyère, remarked, Darlan was far more than a veteran of a series of tough fights at sea and also on land. A Gascon, he came from a family of famous seamen, one of whom had fought with notable courage at Trafalgar.



*Wide World Photos, Inc.*

The Admiral of the Fleet, François Darlan, wearing the Grand Cross of the Legion of Honor and other decorations won in action.



The Admiral himself had entered the Naval School on October first, 1899, at eighteen.

He went to China after he graduated. During the war, sea service brought him distinguished citations, and on the battlefield in Champagne he commanded the naval guns that beat down the Hindenburg Line. By 1929 he was a rear-admiral, by 1934 a vice-admiral in command of the Atlantic Fleet. Recalled to take charge of all the French naval forces, he was described by that apt judge of men, the former Minister of Marine, François Pietri, as "not only extremely intelligent, but an endless worker." Experience had shown that Darlan, "while prudent, took any chance when necessary." But it was René La Bruyère who put his finger on the real meaning of the rank and authority given Darlan.

He was a diplomat, this Darlan, a charming, well-mannered man, Bruyère recalled. But he knew his business so well that he never needed to yield an inch when it came to French interests, however great the force represented by the allies of France. If the fact that Gamelin was given command of the British army as well as the French armies, if that fact was significant in 1939, so was the rank given Darlan, and the way Daladier backed him up. But why did Daladier do this? Because he liked him? Possibly, but really because Darlan, like Gamelin, was fitted to command—to command fighting men. Such commanders, however, must be in turn commanded. Specialists in a special field, they are of the very first importance. Without them nations come to nothing, but in the end it is not they who point the way.

It is the men who talk well, for words are soldiers of the mind, and, as Kemal Pasha knew, intelligence is everything. That Daladier had it—how much was the question—the well-informed found out when he returned from Munich.

He had wanted to go there alone, but Chamberlain had forestalled him. While Chamberlain might have been right, the French Premier knew that there were influences in England that would probably refuse to let Hitler fight it out with Russia.

They—notably Winston Churchill—would want to get rid of Hitler first of all and deal with Stalin later.

This meant war, so Daladier called in the French military chiefs and told them to get ready to put teeth in Daladier's purpose which was to make France once more a first-class power in Europe. As it happened, luck was with him. When too many parliamentarians united against him, chance strengthened his hand.

An agreement with Italy would have given France the Mediterranean and so increased the French ability to bargain with England. Mussolini, however, was anything but "a dear little boy sipping milk. Guessing what was in Daladier's mind, he set up a cry for candy. Inspired by him, the Italians began yelling, as only Italians can, mostly for colonies," an American correspondent wrote. Nice was to be returned, and Corsica; Tunis ceded, this writer continued, stating the facts exactly. But he did not go on with the story.

The point was, the Italian demands, at first threatening, became presently offensive.

This united the French behind Daladier, and of this circumstance the Premier took advantage. Soon the Communists had been shoved aside, and Blum was left alone "to play cards with himself. While he took a trip to England to have a chat with Winston Churchill, this got him nowhere." Returning this visit, a former First Lord of the Admiralty, Alfred Duff-Cooper, did an unusual thing.

He wrote an article for a French paper criticizing Maurras, apparently because Maurras kept insisting that Moscow was negotiating with Berlin. As he had been so many times, Maurras turned out to be right, and Maurras was behind Daladier, so much so that people began to say that Daladier saw as clearly as Maurras did the mistakes of the past, the failure to divide up Germany into its Catholic and Protestant sections, the failure to keep the army supplied and trained, the tendency to depend on talk that meant nothing more than "do be a good boy, Adolf!" But "mouthers of

such nonsense, Blum and his crew," to quote a French paper—these talkers Daladier had now shoved aside in favor of the army.

The army was behind the Premier. Explaining the meaning of this in international terms, General Maurice Duval, eminent military critic, writing in *Le Journal des Debats* made it very obvious that while France could use English money and supplies, England needed the French army. Without that army, England would have been endangered as never before in its history. Furthermore, that army was the greatest corps on earth because of its many officers, its experts. So Daladier got what he wanted, the supreme command, the promise that the use of French forces would be restricted to purposes that were French. Selfish, these purposes? Undoubtedly! But what nation ever survived that was anything but selfish? As for faults, had other nations none? The English? Ask the Irish! And Americans? When it came to faults and cigarettes, they had been known to roll their own. Frankly, the French replied, selfishness is a quality peculiar to no nation. Known nationally as patriotism, men fight for it, but not always with arms.

They also fight with words, and in the field of diplomacy Jean Giraudoux had already distinguished himself in 1939, as he had in the world of art.



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## Speaking to Giraudoux

THE appointment of Jean Giraudoux as Commissioner of Information in France—as chief censor of news and opinion—redirected attention to the men who fight with words. With hostilities, of course, arms and the men who bore them took the center of the stage, but only policy lends any meaning to arms, and policy is defined by words. By telling the truth, Daladier gave words, and so French policy, a special quality.

This quality enabled him to capitalize that deep feeling in the French that is most simply described as the French religion. But this religion, what was it? Was it Catholic? There were five million practicing Catholics in France in 1939.

The whole country wore like a gracious garment that patina of tolerance and understanding that was a blessing it owed in part to the Church. Even so, the country could not really be described as Roman Catholic. Nor was it Protestant, though there were Protestants in France; nor Jewish, though there were Jews. Still less was it agnostic. While there were agnostics and even atheists in France, they were outnumbered by the indifferent. But indifferent or hostile to dogma, convinced or questioning, the French were united in 1939, and they were united by religion.

They all had the same religion, as politicians and propagandists knew. From His Eminence, preaching in the cathedral of Our Lady of Paris, to the least of journalists, from Edouard Daladier at the War Office to the humblest of the civil servants, no one doubted

this. How could he? For centuries, openly, obviously, the French had kept to the same devotion, knelt at the same altar, prayed to the same God, and that God was the Christ of free men. France was his kingdom. France was free.

The fact that France meant freedom to the French, national independence and the personal liberty that thrived within that bulwark, this explained everything the French had ever said or done.

The question in 1939 was how to keep France free. With the intention of doing so—and it was this intention that gave him strength—Daladier capitalized that mixture of pride and material interest that is known as patriotism. With this as an excuse, Daladier did what Clemenceau did. But he assumed at the same time a similar responsibility.

He had to make good, or be killed.

He had posed the whole question of what justifies men in power, of what lends vitality to government. But he did not have to answer that question at once.

He had too many advantages in 1939 to be brought up on charges. With the war, government "from above" began to function in earnest. Within the government itself, emotion was shoved into the background. Intelligence began to dictate objectives, to determine policy—the intelligence of Daladier and of the generals and admirals and the chiefs of production who were behind Daladier. For the most part, these men were men who specialized in action. But would Daladier listen to others too? Would the Premier listen to the talkers as well as the men of action, and, if so, to what kind of talkers? Talkers differ, as fighters do.

They differ as engineers do. Engineers create lasting values like the Parthenon and the Union Pacific Railroad. But they also build houses of cards on sands that shift with the winds. In this they resemble artists, for where one artist may say nothing but say it pleasantly, another may discover the truth and express it so well that it remains forever his. Such men as these last, if they are writers, can hardly be justly described simply and solely as

talkers. "But study them in the field of government," Clemenceau advised, explaining the contemptuous implication of what he had said, of his description of "*les bavards*" as men "with what you Americans call the gift of gab." In the field of government, Clemenceau added, such men are in the limelight, so their faults stand out.

There they are in what newspapermen call "the eye of the news," often a none too happy place to be. Often, but insufficiently often! In 1939 it was obvious that if more were known about politicians the world would be better off, for by 1939 even children began to suspect the truth. With misgiving, even children began to realize that there were more scoundrels and liars, more nitwits and weaklings in the field of government than in any other paradise on earth where it was easy to make a living. Happily, there were also brave men there, men with the quality called in the theater "intestinal fortitude"—men with the force of character, the courage that enabled them to take their emotions by the throat and give their minds free play. But such men had to fight or talk their way to power. If they could not talk, they had to call in talkers, and talkers differ as fighters do, and for precisely the same reason.

The fact that a talker expresses himself better in talk than action prompts him, naturally, to become an artist or politician rather than an engineer or soldier. But this choice made, he is formed by education, just as fighters are. Either talkers are pledged by their upbringing to a standard of honor that represents the general good, or they are not. Either they are made fools of by some such type of education as that invented by Rousseau, or they are taught to seek the truth. But what is truth? Others than Pilate have asked that question, and no one knows the answer. But experience is at least a guide to it, so it is worth remembering that "a regime should be judged, like a tree, by its fruits."

These fruits are worth studying for the truth they indicate.

They are also worth studying because it is the truth that makes men free. Unless men learn from experience or from a study of

the record kept of experience, how are they to guess what type of action will lead to what result—in other words what they should do in order to be free? In short, unless they learn from experience how are they to divine the truth that makes men free? But why be free? Even Frenchmen have asked this question, for it is often simpler and more comfortable to be a slave, to let others command because they are more fitted to do so. But these masters of logic and sane action, these masters of men who create prosperity—these lords of government, if they rule free men, must not ask too high a price for the benefits they confer, the French have always insisted in the end.

The men who ruled France because of their obvious ability to do so always had to watch their step.

They had to avoid forcing the goose-step on their fellow countrymen, for the goose-step kills individuality, the quality that distinguishes one man from another and so from the mass of men. Of this quality free men are always proud, instinctively so. Furthermore, it is valuable. Let alone, allowed to express itself freely, it creates a diversified civilization. Calling into being an endless series of contrasts, it tends to relieve that sameness that any goose-step imposes. That sameness where everyone is too much alike, where everyone dresses alike and says more or less the same thing gets on people's nerves, and it does so because it is dull. So the French were always against it.

They preferred the individuality which made life interesting. For this they always fought. While propaganda led foreigners to believe that this fight began with the Revolution, this is far from the truth. When Caesar invaded Gaul, the French were fighting among themselves. For what? For personal liberty! Under the barons that fight continued. Under the Catholics and the Protestants it tore France to pieces.

This gave foreigners their chance. Invading France, they united the French who called on a King to lead them. Led by a King, the French threw the foreigner out.

The Kings made France secure, but they invaded personal liberty in an effort to guarantee that security, nor were they unique in this. Governments always invade personal liberty, but they have always been indicted in France for doing so. By what right did you do this? the French always asked their rulers. To protect us from foreigners? That has to be done, but if, at the same time, you enslave us, force us all into the army or into certain types of production, you destroy the very thing you are supposed to protect from foreigners. In establishing one freedom, you must not destroy another, the personal freedom which alone makes civilization worth while. Still, France comes first. France is the guarantee of every other freedom. Reminding the French of this, Daladier aroused the majority that backed him. But he was attacked.

He was attacked because he pushed aside special interests in the interest of France as a whole. Special interests wanted him to attack Mussolini as well as Hitler, to go to the rescue of the Czechs.

He refused. As a dictator, he could do this. As a dictator, he had only a council to consider, and neither he nor his cabinet could be too much affected by emotional considerations. But a crowd could, his opponents knew. In a crowd emotion over-rides very quickly both the will and intelligence. Knowing this, propagandists play on the emotions, often for selfish reasons, for what they get out of it.

It was the propagandists, honest and dishonest in the past, who aroused the emotions that shot the French far afield into other peoples' pastures, committing them to crusades from which others profited, notably the bankers. But never the French, nor, in the end, even Napoleon! Furthermore, before the war of 1914, it was propagandists of the same kind who sold Russia, and so disaster, to the French in the form of bonds, and in 1939 the French ran exactly the same risk. Propagandists were everywhere. Some represented Moscow, a political International, others a banking International difficult to localize. Others represented themselves, and still others, sincerely enough, what they thought was best for

France. But sincere or otherwise, they had to be controlled. If advantage were to be taken of Pétain's reminder that "fire kills," his policy had to be "sold" to a people impatient to have done, once and for all, with the Germans. Hence Giraudoux! But Giraudoux was more than a government propagandist.

He was a distinguished and successful writer who had risen to the rank of Minister Plenipotentiary in the French diplomatic service. So he was skilled in two fields, in that of convincing the Foreign Ministers who represent Kings and their councils, or presidents and theirs, and in that of pleasing the crowd, for Giraudoux had in France a large following that admired him, among other things, for his wit. To this he gave immediate expression when he took office as Commissioner of Information. Apparently, he thought Americans were broad-minded enough to enjoy the joke, for he showed his wit at once by appointing George Duhamel to a bureau charged with influencing American opinion—Duhamel who had written the most unpleasant book about the United States ever signed by a Frenchman. But this, like French propaganda abroad, was a detail.

The chief business of the censor was not with foreigners, but with France, a circumstance that brought special interests into the picture. As a diplomat, Giraudoux belonged to "the Quai d'Orsay crowd." Like postmen and policemen, these people were civil servants, and civil servants in France made up a vast group known as The Two Hundred and First Family, a group with special interests to protect, for they had their own prospects of promotion to consider, and their own policies to further.

The Foreign Office, familiarly known as the Quai d'Orsay, for years had been ruled by a clique that sometimes, but only sometimes, did as the Minister said. At one time Philippe Berthelot was its spokesman. Permanent Secretary of the Foreign Office, Berthelot had been a close friend of Edouard Benes, Czecho-Slovakia's Man Friday, and there had been talk about that. Spies had slipped into the secret passages that led to information, and there had been tales,

even in the papers, tales colored with intrigue. Lovely women had passed that way, trailing elusive perfume. But what really mattered was less these ladies than Czecho-Slovakia, and who had made money there.

This state was doomed to die. Like Poland, it could not get along with its neighbors, so it was invaded by the most powerful of them, and, in the end, this forced war on France. So if some Frenchmen made money there, France did not. But would that have mattered to Philippe Berthelot? Many were doubtful.

They were pleased when he was succeeded by the poet, Alexis Leger, that slim, dark young man from the tropics, who was always tracing circles on pieces of paper. But had Leger read history, or Richelieu's testament? If so, why had he helped pull the stopper out of the bottle called Austria? That stopper was Mussolini. With Mussolini no longer opposed, Hitler walked into Austria. Even "people in general," a French minister told me in 1939, realized now that "Mussolini should never have been pushed into the arms of Hitler. In 1919, Austria should never have been weakened. Only Austria had ever been an effective and inexpensive check on Prussia." But those mad (high) hatters at the peace conference had divided up Austria and kept Germany united, a threat to peace.

"The diplomats were not responsible for this," the diplomats insisted. If they fought with words, they fought with the words given them by politicians. But after all, why not, others who were not diplomats replied in 1939, for it was a politician, Daladier, who reinvigorated French policy. Pushing aside the intriguing diplomats, when the war began the Premier replaced George Bonnet as Foreign Minister, taking command himself of the government service that fought with words. But outside the government, whose view was to prevail? That of Daladier, or that of the propagandists anxious to stir up emotion, to commit France to a crusade against Fascism, wherever it showed itself? Or to English interests? Here was a ticklish question, one that kept Daladier on tiptoe, leading him finally to protest publicly against a widespread feeling in

France that was kept awake by the German radio at Stuttgart to which so many in France listened. What the French traitor speaking there kept constantly to the front was the idea that England would "fight till the last Frenchman was dead."

"These are miserable attempts," Daladier stormed on November thirtieth, 1939, "to imply that losses are unequally divided between the French and British when at this hour when I am speaking the losses in human lives of our ally exceed the loss of life by the French."

The fear widespread in France was that the French army would be drawn too far into the attempt to strengthen or save England. That Daladier should have to protest publicly showed how deep that feeling was. But what caused it? Disproportionate losses in the last war and the failure of the British navy to reduce Helgoland? Partially! But most of all the failure of the English to enforce conscription and prepare for this new war. While he would be a blind partisan who denied the virtues of the English, they were never ready, so they never won any battle but the last one, and that one with their allies.

This fact involved heavily such allies as America and France.

They could not let England down. England was too important to their own welfare, the English felt too much as they did about the values threatened by the totalitarian states. However much Americans disliked the idea of having a dictatorship of their own, one that would take over the control of American lives and properties completely and raise a great army so large it could be really useful only as an expeditionary force—however much Americans disliked this idea, England had to be helped. However much the French disapproved using Frenchmen for purposes other than those strictly French, France's security was as dependent on England as that of England was on France.

This fact had to be faced, but there was no need of propagandists such as the former First Lord of the Admiralty, Alfred Duff-Cooper, to remind Americans and the French of this. Along with



Winston Churchill, and Anthony Eden, Duff-Cooper had been to the forefront of the clique that had forced Germany's hand before England was ready. So, while he pleased those in France and America who were in agreement with this chaffing at the bit, he stirred up resentment elsewhere, a resentment fed fire by the fact that England had not been able to save minor countries attacked by Hitler and Stalin. In France, naturally, Jean Giraudoux had to deal with this resentment. With Daladier's help, he succeeded partially. But could he control manifestations even more important to the French? That he should try, he was reminded by others. Speaking to Giraudoux—"it is to Jean Giraudoux I am speaking"—that fighting journalist, Henri Béraud, recalled that there had been too many exaggerations during the last war.

The Russians about to enter Berlin!

The Kaiser a suicide!

The Germans about to revolt!

That this sort of thing should not be repeated, Béraud demanded in the name of the men who had gone to the front. For what purpose did all this propaganda serve? None, except to enslave men to the idea that it would be easy to rush through to Berlin! Only the truth keeps men free of such madness, and the soldiers, their letters showed, meant to have the truth.

They meant to control the future. Tardieu who had seen it done—Tardieu and many others had told them how they had been robbed of security in 1919. Fooled in 1919 by the politicians, the fighters meant to get results in 1939. But who would lead these soldiers, disillusioned but determined, in an effort, after the war, to restore home truths to French policy, both in France and abroad? General Joseph Vuillemin, that ace of aviation who had worked his way up from the ranks? Or General Georges himself? Both were possible, at least so diplomats were told privately. But where Georges' following was Royalist and reactionary, Vuillemin's origins were simple, and in 1938, as chief of the flying corps, he had been against fighting then because France was not ready. Nor

England! But because Vuillemin was opposed to fighting then and there, the advocates of a special point of view turned on the general. That "voice" of the Foreign Office—or, more exactly, of certain diplomats there—the publicist, Pertinax, damned Vuillemin openly, but he did not speak for the fighters.

The soldiers felt otherwise about the general, foreigners were told.

The fear that some general like Vuillemin, some "man on horseback" might take advantage of the soldiers' feeling, as Napoleon had, was widespread among politicians in 1939, but "they have no one but themselves to thank," soldiers kept saying.

This is not entirely fair to the politicians. Many of them were charming men, sincerely interested in others, kindness itself, warm-hearted as Herriot was. But the fact remains that they went too far in trying to please the people in order to win elections, counted too much on help from elsewhere. While they lost in twenty years the fruits of victory, the fact remains that they produced from among themselves the man who saved France. Only some of them had fought him, notably Blum and his crowd. Sitting in the Blum cabinet, staying there though it hurt him, staying there "with death in his heart," Daladier had saved the army. Turning on Blum, he had saved France, his friends said. But his ability to fight with words, the restrictions he imposed by decree, hampered the lesser talkers, so they called Daladier a turncoat. "Alas, we forgot," one of them remarked to me, repenting when the war came.

"We forgot history and Henry."

They forgot that no such significant turncoat as Daladier had appeared in French politics since that hook-nosed and bearded Bourbon, Henry of Navarre, helmeted and white-plumed, a hand on his sword and an eye on the ladies, rode the broad highway that led to Paris. Because he was a Protestant, Henry had been denied the right to enter the capital.

There had been civil war in France between Catholics and dissenters, and about that Henry finally did something effective.

Turning his coat, he became a Catholic. But if he adopted the religion of the majority, he guaranteed the Protestants their rights. Credited with remarking that "Paris was well worth a mass," he at least realized that what was important was freedom from war, the freedom to go about one's business again. But if his royal successors freed France from invasion, they also invaded individual rights, forcing the French to conform to various standards, notably the guilds and a Catholicism that unfortunately came in the course of time to favor the high priests more than the faith. So the French revolted, only to commit themselves to universal military service.

This complete invasion of personal liberty infuriated the French, creating a problem.

This problem Daladier had to meet, or die, the well-informed predicted gloomily in 1939, for what were the French getting out of the immense sacrifice universal service imposed? France could not long pay the price of a major war. Unquestionably, the system would crumble under that pressure. While Daladier had dealt with the birth rate, children have to be supported and the general buying power in France had long been at low ebb. Left to financiers, the situation had not improved. But in appointing Raoul Dautry Minister of Armaments, and Daniel Serruys Minister of National Economy, Daladier did a new thing.

He put in power men who understood that it was not only unkind but stupid to permit conditions upon which propagandists batten.

A leader of men, Dautry worked among them, with them. Like Serruys, he realized that it is men who makes states. Reinforce them, then, in the aggregate! These are all your soldiers! Thanks to Serruys, there was a moratorium on debt and rent. Prices were kept down. Companies continued paying salaries, in part, to men called to the front, something they could afford to do because, back home, men were working longer hours. Best of all, slowly—temporarily, perhaps, but surely—workers as well as soldiers united behind Daladier, for what Daladier had accomplished was no

longer in question. Since Henry of Navarre, no man had so united a country apparently hopelessly divided. In 1914 nothing like this had occurred. Jaurès had been shot, Caillaux suspected of pacifism, and later accused of treason. But in 1939 nothing like this had occurred, partly because the force that always tips the scale in France, the women, had moved to the Premier's support. Quietly, unobtrusively but nonetheless surely the women had strengthened Daladier and the army, as General Gamelin knew, for it was the commanding officer of the French and British forces, not his wife, who had time to write gatherings of women who had called on Madame Gamelin to address them.

"My wife is too busy, so I am replying for her," the general wrote a group of distinguished women, and to another gathering of working women, he wrote, "She will come to you."

There was a precedent in French history for what the women did and were expected to do in 1939. Always, from the beginning, as Caesar noted, they had preferred that men should be men, preferred men who did things instead of just talking about them. At the time of the Revolution, it was they, the women—not only the aristocrats but all the women of France—who opened the door to the men—the *men!*—who put teeth in the French Revolution. Letting the truth in again, the truth that it is men who make states and that men are formed by their education, the women of France acted as they did because the Kings had made courtiers out of the aristocrats who had formerly lived on their estates and looked after their people. That they did just this many French writers insisted. But for the most part foreign writers followed the lead given them by the English who kept repeating that the French peasantry was forced to live on roots. Even so accomplished a scholar as Sisley Huddleston made the mistake of translating the French word, *racines*, as roots. In old French, it meant vegetables. But if the French aristocrats looked after their people at one time, or bore arms, they lost touch with both.

The Kings were responsible for this.

The aristocrats had fought the Kings and sought to undermine their power, so the Kings began keeping them at court where they could watch them, and at court the aristocrats gradually lost the habit of fighting. Instead they became specialists in conversation, brilliant conversation, historians and memoir writers record, but conversation, nevertheless. For such talkative dandies incompetent to provide women and France with the security essential to nations and motherhood, what use had the women of France? None! So they shooed them out of the picture, along with the Kings, when the royal line, too, weakened, nor had French women changed in 1939.

It was not they who were "at a loss to understand," as many politicians were, why Daladier omitted the usual "*Vive la République*" from his radio speech the night that war began. As they knew, the Republic had shaped and furthered the purposes of weak men rather than strong men. Only weak men could have dissipated so quickly the fruits of victory, nor was it the Republic that righted the situation.

It was a minority within the Republic, a minority kept informed and alive by the great personalities, by those pre-eminently persuasive men, the artists of France.

This minority destroyed the Republic, at least for the moment, and it did so because it was sick of playing second fiddle to England, sick of Blum and the Communists. In short, it had had enough of Internationals, whether they were political or financial. Made up of politicians and publicists who preferred even military rule to further disorder, of industrialists and engineers who preferred creating real values to quick sales, and of financiers and bankers who were natives, not chorus men from elsewhere, this minority chose Daladier as the most likely man for its purpose.

This done, it made room for Daladier and the army, and a majority approved what it had done. Only the enthusiasm of the French for France explains this. Only their religion suggests how profound the origin of this movement was.

The dominant religion of France inspired all these men and women. If history is any guide, however, once France is safe again, this same enthusiasm will inspire once more the fight for personal liberty, a circumstance that prompts a question. "How in the world can you have free men except in a republic?" an American asks. While this question is natural enough, it is based on a false assumption.

It assumes that *forms* of government are important. What matters is men. Governments of every kind invade individual rights. Only men prevent this, the right kind of men.

The right kind of men kick governments around like footballs, as the French did for centuries. Creating kings and dictators as they needed them, they defended France, but always in the end they began again their battle for personal liberty, as the right kind of men always do in the end. But how are such men formed? How are the women who help make life worth while formed? Given healthy origins and an environment worth defending, they are both formed, obviously, by education, and French education has always, at its best, made pre-eminently evident the fact that personal liberty depends on national liberty. Beyond a nation's borders, there is no one men can trust. Within its borders there are, to be sure, only a few, but these few have taught and led the French well. If they have been able to do so, however, it is because of the French. Achilles himself could not lead cowards, nor Aristotle pound sense into a numskull's head, so it is the men and women of France, these rule France.

These rule France. Others only represent them, and if they represent them falsely they are always found out in the end. For what are they, the financiers and the publicists, the politicians, the Presidents and the Premiers, the Ministers for a moment? What are they, the Princes and the priests, the personalities and the fighters? Nothing that matters to the French, unless they know how to protect both France and personal liberty from invasion.

It is this, and only this, that really matters to the French. How

to preserve *these* values, establish *this* mean between extremes, it is *this* truth the French have sought for centuries. Battling gallantly, they have fought for it. Despite mistakes, despite the failings even of their loveliest women and their bravest men, they have won more often than they have lost, and they have won because a great faith has sustained them. Beyond the shadow of events, they have seen a vision that has kept their sword drawn in a great cause. As they have known, however much we see through a glass darkly, beyond that obscurity the Christ of free men waits, standing guard eternally, keeping watch above his own.

This faith sustains the free, as the long record of the French shows indisputably. Reading it over, there remains only one thing to do: applaud! Men and women of France, salutations! As few have ever fought on earth, you have fought for the truth, fought to insure it, to make it secure on earth, or fought to find it again, if for a time you have missed it. Once more salutations, with esteem and with affection! As few have ever done, you have realized that it is freedom from invasion, national and personal, that matters most to men.

It is this that keeps men free, and only freedom matters.

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